



March 21, 2014

The Honorable Louise Slaughter  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2469 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Slaughter,

As members of the Patient, Consumer, and Public Health Coalition, we strongly support H.R. 1150, the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act. The Act would help to preserve the effectiveness of antimicrobials used to treat diseases in both animals and humans.

The many antibiotics routinely fed to farm animals are most often used to spur growth rather than to fight infections. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recent report explains that the overuse of antibiotics for animals helps to spread antibiotic resistance, because "drug-resistant bacteria can remain on meat from animals" and "the bacteria can spread to humans."<sup>1</sup> In 2011, "80% of antibiotics sold by weight in the U.S. were used for meat and poultry production."<sup>2</sup> Although the FDA recently issued a *voluntary* guidance on the use of antibiotics for animals, it has been sharply criticized as being weak and ineffective.

The CDC has noted that more than 2 million Americans fall ill and more than 23,000 die each year due to pathogens that are antibiotic resistant. Your legislation directly addresses this serious problem in a reasonable manner by requiring an applicant seeking approval of a new antimicrobial animal drug to demonstrate that the new drug's nontherapeutic use (use in feed or water or for healthy farm animals) will not harm humans by promoting antimicrobial

resistance. H.R. 1150 would also phase out the routine use of eight classes of medically important antibiotics in farm animals while still allowing the treatment of sick animals.

The CDC has stated that “Perhaps the single most important action needed to greatly slow down the development and spread of antibiotic resistant infections is to change the way antibiotics are used.”<sup>1</sup> Your bill directly addresses this issue by promoting good stewardship, protecting new and old drugs from being used when they are not needed, thus saving them for when other drugs are ineffective. For instance, your bill prohibits giving antimicrobial drugs to a healthy food-producing animal for disease control unless there is a significant risk that a disease will be transmitted to the animal.

We strongly agree with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) that “substantial efforts must be made to decrease inappropriate overuse [of antimicrobials] in animals and agriculture.”<sup>3</sup> That is why we strongly support H.R. 1150, which will reduce antimicrobial resistance by reducing or eliminating the use of these drugs in healthy farm animals. We look forward to working with you on this critical public health legislation.

American Medical Student Association  
American Medical Women’s Association  
Annie Appleseed Project  
Breast Cancer Action  
Connecticut Center for Patient Safety  
Jacobs Institute of Women’s Health  
National Consumers League  
National Physicians Alliance  
National Research Center for Women & Families  
National Women’s Health Network  
WoodyMatters

*For more information, contact Paul Brown at (202) 223-4000 or pb@center4research.org*

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the United States, 2013. Accessed February 5, 2014. <http://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/threat-report-2013/>.

<sup>2</sup> Plumer B, (December 14, 2013). The FDA is cracking down on antibiotics on farms. Here’s what you should know. *The Washington Post*. Accessed February 5, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/12/14/the-fda-is-cracking-down-on-antibiotics-at-farms-heres-what-you-should-know/>

<sup>3</sup> National Research Council. *Microbial Threats to Health: Emergence, Detection, and Response*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2003. Accessed March 13, 2014. [http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=10636](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=10636)