

May 30th, 2007

Dear Marc,

I am writing to thank you for making a difference in the lives of children with food allergies. Last August, when The Food Allergy Project asked for your assistance in preparing for a meeting with Dr. Anthony Fauci at the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), you took the time to help. Fourteen children's hospitals across the country supplied data demonstrating the growth in percentage of food allergy sufferers in patient practices; and four were able to supply the current and historical ratio of food allergy patients within the total allergy clinic patient population. This dramatic statistical proof enormously strengthened the presentation we made to Dr. Fauci last October.

The data supplied demonstrated that food allergy is a significant portion of the patient population in the allergy clinics of our nation's children's hospitals. The percentages of food allergic patients within pediatric practice populations ranged from 20% to 50%, with several outliers that specialize in food allergy reporting more than 80%. The mean, not including the outliers, showed that 33% of patients in the allergy clinics suffered from food allergy. The rate of increase over the last 15 years migrated from 5% to 40%+. A selection from these responses is attached for your review.

Not only was Dr. Fauci surprised by the data, but he was also responsive to it. Dr. Fauci acknowledged during the meeting that \$8 million per year was not enough money to attract a broad array of world class scientists to the field. (The field is currently spearheaded by a small but dedicated group of scientists led by Dr. Hugh Sampson at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York.) The NIAID initiated a Funding Opportunity Announcement (NOT-A1-07-027) to support innovative exploratory and developmental investigations to determine the mechanisms underlying food allergy. We are encouraged and hopeful that this program will receive enough funding to decisively broaden the participation rate of food allergy investigators enabled by the NIH.

We reached another encouraging milestone just last week. On Monday May 21st, the Senate Appropriations Committee held a hearing on the NIH FY 2008 Budget. During this hearing, Senator Tom Harkin questioned Dr. Fauci about the alarming growth in food allergy over the last decade. For the record, Dr. Fauci agreed that more resources could be dedicated to this field.

We must continue to educate our legislators and the decision makers inside the NIH about the rapid increase of food allergy incidence over the last several decades. We must make clear to them the very real challenges you face dealing with food allergic patients in your practices. We must urge them to acknowledge the magnitude of the problem: that food allergy research receives just \$8 million per year; which is 2% of the amount given to asthma research, and less than 1% of diabetes research funding. Asthma and diabetes are both serious ailments; and we would never seek to reduce the funding for either of them. We make the comparison only to show how much hard work we still must do to increase the level of funding needed for food allergy research, an ailment we know to be growing in seriousness and prevalence.

We are encouraged by signs, such as last week's hearing, that our message is getting through. Yet this only makes us more determined. We promise that we will continue to advocate for more food allergy research dollars until we reach our stated goal of having the NIH increase the amount of funding to \$50 million dollars per year by 2009.

Again, we thank you for your support. You can count on The Food Allergy Project to continue its work on behalf of food allergic children, as we know you will continue yours.

Dave Bunning