November 20, 2015

To: Hospital leadership name

Name of Health care facility

Contact Email

Subject: **Support for combatting antibiotic resistance through hospital food service**

As a clinical leader in this community, I urge you to phase out the purchase of meat that was raised using routine, non-therapeutic antibiotics at your hospital to address the threat of antibiotic resistance.

Antibiotic overuse contributes to increasing rates of antibiotic resistance in infectious organisms. This creates a growing challenge and a significant cost when treating patients who have infections that may be resistant to multiple drugs. According to the Infectious Diseases Society of America, longer, more expensive hospital stays for treating antibiotic resistance cost the U.S. health care sector an estimated $21 to $34 billion and eight million additional hospital days annually.[[1]](#endnote-1) Addressing this challenge is the mission of system-wide antibiotic stewardship programs, now mandatory by Center for Medicare Services for some health care institutions.

A growing number of U.S. hospitals, schools, and other institutions are seeking to purchase meat produced without routine non-therapeutic antibiotics as a way to address antibiotic resistance, and to reduce the negative public health impacts of industrialized meat production.[[2]](#endnote-2),[[3]](#endnote-3) The significant food purchasing power of the hospital, especially when aligned with peers in health care, represents an important opportunity for us to advocate for improved antibiotic stewardship in agriculture. **Responsible antibiotic stewardship throughout communities is an important component of comprehensive programs to reduce antibiotic-resistant infections inside and outside of hospitals.** Our commitment to antibiotic stewardship should extend beyond our prescribing practices to our food purchasing practices.

**Background**

Approximately 80% of antibiotics sold in the United States are used in animal agriculture, mostly for non-therapeutic purposes (such as growth promotion and routine prophylaxis in industrial agricultural settings).[[4]](#endnote-4) **Antibiotics used in animal agriculture are often closely related to antibiotics used for human therapy, and there is a growing body of evidence that links the overuse of antibiotics in agriculture to antibiotic resistance in human pathogens.[[5]](#endnote-5)** Consensus among independent experts and organizations, including the United States Institute of Medicine/National Academy of Science and the World Health Organization, supports the conclusion that agricultural antibiotic overuse contributes to clinically significant bacterial antibiotic resistance.[[6]](#endnote-6),[[7]](#endnote-7) In addition, more than 300 organizations, including the American Medical Association, American Public Health Association, and Infectious Disease Society of America, strongly advocate ending the routine use of antibiotics in feed and water in agriculture.[[8]](#endnote-8),[[9]](#endnote-9) Routine antibiotic use in agriculture was banned in Sweden in the 1980s, in Denmark in the 1990s, and in the European Union in 2006. Some data from Denmark demonstrate that a reduction in bacterial antibiotic resistance was achieved after routine non-therapeutic agricultural antibiotic use was banned.[[10]](#endnote-10)

In 2014, in response to recommendations from the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST), the White House released the National Strategy to Combat Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria calling out the need to track resistance in humans as it relates to food and antibiotics given to animals to promote shared antibiotic stewardship.[[11]](#endnote-11)

For additional resources and guidance on sourcing meat raised without routine antibiotics, visit [www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org](http://www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org) or <https://noharm-uscanada.org/cccas>.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Name, Credential

Title

Affiliation (if any)

Email

Phone

*This letter has the support of the Clinicians Champions in Comprehensive Antibiotic Stewardship (CCCAS) Collaborative, a joint effort of the Pediatric Infectious Disease Society, Sharing Antimicrobial Reports for Pediatric Stewardship Group, and Health Care Without Harm.*

1. Infectious Disease Society of America. Available at: <http://www.idsociety.org/AR_Facts/> Accessed October 20, 2016 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Balanced Menus, Best Practices, Health Care Without Harm, http://www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org/balancedmenus.bestpractices.php [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. “Chicago Public Schools Largest District to Serve Chicken Raised Without Antibiotics,” Press Release for the Pew Charitable Trusts, Nov. 1, 2011, http://www.pewhealth.org/news-room/press-releases/chicago-public-schoolslargestdistrict-to-serve-chicken-raised-without-antibiotics-85899367477 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. McKenna, Maryn (2010), “Farm Animals Get 80 Percent of Antibiotics Sold in U.S.,” Wired, http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/2010/12/news-update-farm-animals-get-80- of-antibiotics-sold-in-us/ [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. For a complete annotated bibliography, see http://www.keepantibioticsworking.com/new/KAWfiles/64\_2\_107403.pdf (93 references [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. . Institute of Medicine, Board on Global Health (2003). Microbial Threats to Health: Emergence, Detection, and Response, National Academy of Sciences Press, Washington, DC, http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?isbn=030908864X [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Joint WHO/FAO/OIE Expert Workshop on Non-human Antimicrobial Usage and Antimicrobial Resistance, Geneva, 1-5 December 2003, http://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/micro/en/amr.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Joint Statement on Antibiotic Resistance from 25 National Health Organizations and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2012), http://www.cddep.org/publications/joint\_statement\_antibiotic\_resistance\_us\_centers\_dise ase\_control\_and\_prevention\_cdc\_and [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Infectious Disease Society of America position on non-judicious use of antibiotics in agriculture: http://www.idsociety.org/Agriculture\_policy/ [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. . Agersø Y, Aarestrup FM. Voluntary ban on cephalosporin use in Danish pig production has effectively reduced extended-spectrum cephalosporinase-producing Escherichia coli in slaughter pigs. J Antimicrob Chemother. 2013 Mar;68(3):569-72. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. National Strategy to Combat Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria. March 2015. Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/national_action_plan_for_combating_antibotic-resistant_bacteria.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-11)