



July 23, 2010

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

As you work to develop the President's budget for Fiscal Year 2012, The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) respectfully urges you to make the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) a major priority. Consistent funding increases over a sustained period of time are essential to restoring the agency's capacity to handle a rapidly growing list of complex public health responsibilities. The agency's FY 10 staffing level from budget authority appropriations is the same as it was in 1994.

ASHP is a 35,000-member national professional association that represents pharmacists who practice in hospitals, health maintenance organizations, long-term care facilities, home care, and other components of health care systems. Pharmacists in hospitals and health systems are experts in medication use who serve on interdisciplinary patient-care teams.

As you know, FDA regulates products that represent nearly 25 percent of consumer spending in America. However, today's FDA faces severe resource constraints due to years of chronic underfunding and an exponential increase in the agency's public health responsibilities including serious threats such as bioterrorism, the H1N1 Influenza Virus, and the increasing globalization of the products FDA regulates.

FDA's public health mission is to ensure the safety and effectiveness of drugs, biologics and medical devices. No other agency or private sector entity serves this vital public health purpose in our society. ASHP firmly believes that the allocation of sufficient federal resources to the FDA to meet its public health mission is a necessity, especially with regard to ensuring safe medication use.

Continuing chronic underfunding of FDA affects our public health, hinders our economy and compromises our national security. We are requesting at least a twenty percent increase over the FY11 budget.

TOGETHER WE MAKE A GREAT TEAM

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue and we look forward to working with your office to ensure the safety and efficacy of our nation's drug supply. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact either Justine Coffey, Director of Federal Regulatory Affairs at jcoffey@ash.org, or Joseph Hill, Director of Federal Legislative Affairs at jhill@ashp.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Henri R. Manasse, Jr.", written in black ink.

Henri R. Manasse, Jr., Ph.D., Sc.D
Executive Vice President and CEO