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July 26, 2010

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

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

On behalf of the Council of the American Society for Pharmacology & Experimental Therapeutics (ASPET), we respectfully ask that you make the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) among your highest funding priorities as you develop the President's budget for Fiscal Year 2012. Consistent increases in funding over a sustained period of time are essential to restoring the agency's capacity and are of critical importance to enable FDA to handle a rapidly growing list of complex public health responsibilities and increase the agency's regulatory science capacity.

As you are aware, the FDA regulates products that represent nearly 25 percent of consumer spending in America. However, the agency faces severe resource constraints due to years of chronic underfunding together with a significant increase in its public health portfolio because of serious threats such as bioterrorism and the H1N1 Influenza Virus, and the increasing globalization of the products FDA regulates. As the critical interface between the pharmaceutical industry and the country's public health, the FDA plays a key role in evaluating new compounds for the treatment of many diseases. Adequate, sustained funding for the FDA will help to meet these demands as well as those of new opportunities in FDA's growing scientific portfolio. These include the need for improved clinical trial design, improved standardization of clinical trial data to improve public health measures, as well as investments in nanotechnology for innovative drug delivery systems, bioinformatics, systems biology and drug development.

Continued chronic underfunding of the FDA endangers our public health, hinders our economy, and compromises our national security. Underfunding undermines the role of the FDA as a regulatory agency and affects the morale of these important public employees. ASPET requests at least a twenty percent increase over the FY11 budget.

ASPET is a 4,900 member scientific society whose members conduct basic and clinical pharmacological research within the academic, industrial, and government sectors. Our members discover and develop new medicines and therapeutic agents that fight existing and emerging diseases as well as increase our knowledge regarding how these therapeutics affect humans.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

James R. Halpert
President

