



THE PROVIDENCE
COMMUNITY HEALTH
CENTERS, INC.

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March 28, 2004

Lester M. Crawford, D.V.M., Ph.D.
Deputy Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane (HF-1/14-71/PKLN)
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Deputy Commissioner Crawford,

I urge you to develop a clear, consistent policy regarding the recall of foods with undeclared allergens, a policy that protects the millions of Americans who have food allergies.

As a Physician and Allergist at a network of federally funded Community Health Centers which treat many inner-city and non-English speaking families, it is critical for us to be able to trust the accuracy of the ingredient label and know that the FDA will take action for mislabeled products. Since many of our patients do not read English fluently, they rely even more on your diligence in seeing that products are labeled clearly and correctly, and that they are recalled immediately if errors occur.

It is crucial to my many patients with food allergy to have ingredient labels that are simple, reliable, and trustworthy. Equally as crucial, however, is to have FDA, the federal body in charge of food safety, to take charge and recall food items with undeclared allergens. I'm thinking of one little boy (a patient of mine) who almost died from milk allergy before his mom knew of his condition. Wouldn't it be tragic if the FDA does not recall products that inadvertently contain milk or some other allergenic food, not properly labeled, perhaps leading to life-threatening anaphylaxis due to this?

I hope that you will continue to look out for the safety of patients with severe food allergies. Thanks for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Stanley Hoyt Block, M.D.
Medical Director & Allergist, The Providence Community Health Centers
Clinical Associate Professor, Pediatrics & Community Health – Brown Medical School

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