

**Statement by Steven Sesterhenn, MD, MBA  
President, Board of Directors  
To the FDA Joint Meeting of the Nonprescription Drugs Advisory Committee and  
the Pulmonary-Allergy Drugs Advisory Committee**

**Re: Citizen Petition 98P-0610/CP1**

**May 2, 2001**

Thirty-eight percent of Americans suffer from allergic diseases that may require antihistamine treatment. Allergic rhinitis alone affects 20 percent (20%) of the U.S. population and contributes to the severity of asthma, sinusitis and otitis media. Additionally, allergic rhinitis results in 3.8 million lost school and work days annually.

Because of the huge impact on so many people, the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) strongly supports the FDA's work to assure the safety and efficacy of products available to the public. Our Board of Directors is concerned how the pending decision may impact a patient's overall health, reasonable physician oversight of potentially life threatening allergies, the availability of treatment options, shifting economic burdens, and how these many factors may impact their quality of life. The AAFA Board of Directors, after extensive deliberation, supports a thorough and data driven process to determine the impact on patient health outcomes and whether patients are best served by moving non-sedating antihistamines to OTC designation.

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America is an independent, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life for the 50 million people in the U.S. with asthma and allergies through education, advocacy and research. AAFA,