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and Developmental Disabilities

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PETER M RIVERA
Assemblyman 76th District
Bronx County

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DISTRICT OFFICE:
1262 Castle Hill Ave.
Bronx, New York 10462
(718) 931-2620

ALBANY OFFICE:
Room 826
Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248
(518) 455-5102

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Division of Documents Management (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1601
Rockville, Maryland 20852

To Whom I May Concern:

I am writing in support of the continued designation of over the counter (OTC) epinephrine-metered dose inhalers for the treatment of asthma as an essential use of ozone-depleting substances under Section 2.125 (21CFR2.125). If this designation is removed from the mentioned pharmaceutical, there would be a serious public health impact on low-income and the uninsured. This is an important health related issue in the community I represent as a member of the New York State Assembly

As chair of the Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force, the issue of asthma, its causes and related health issues are a top priority. A third of all Hispanics are uninsured and simultaneously our communities are overburdened with high rates of diseases caused by man-made factors that are exacerbated by willful neglect. In the Bronx, the rate of asthma is more than 855 cases for every 100,000 people. It is my duty, as an elected official, to voice my support for the continuation of policies that will help ease the problems caused by illnesses such as asthma.

According to data I have reviewed, it is my understanding that close to 20% of asthmatics use both prescription and over the counter medications to treat their condition. While I understand that, ideally, asthma should be treated and monitored by a physician using prescription drugs and testing at appropriate intervals, this scenario is unfortunately not a viable option for many people in my community and other Hispanic communities where low-incomes and high rates of uninsured are very common. In these communities, the only relief for an asthma attack is found in over the counter medications to treat their condition.

I reiterate for emphasis: The removal of such products from the marketplace would have a significantly adverse impact on the public health of the communities that I represent. For the sake of the well being of those individual, many of them children, who suffer from asthma, I urge you to continue the essential use designation for the OTC epinephrine metered-dose inhaler drug products like Primatene Mist.

It is my hope that the need to exempt ozone-depleting substances from daily use will be a thing of the past, as public officials work to increase access to health care and reduce the man-made environmental causes that create chronic illnesses such as asthma. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

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Peter M. Rivera
Member of Assembly