

The Congressional Food Allergy Research Caucus Background for Advocates

Summary: In 2021, FARE led the effort to create the Congressional Food Allergy Research Caucus and we currently have 17 members. The Caucus is co-chaired by Reps. Patrick McHenry (R-NC-10) and Doris Matsui (D-CA-07), and the Vice-Chairs are Reps. Ben Cline (R-VA-06) and Ro Khanna (D-CA-17). The Caucus is an organization of bipartisan and like-minded individuals dedicated to tackling a specific cause or issue and there are more than 100 such organizations in the House of Representatives.

The Congressional Food Allergy Research Caucus includes:

Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA-11)	Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI-08)	Rep. Susan Wild (D-PA-07)
Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ-05)	Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY-20)	Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D-MI-08)
Rep. Richard Hudson (R-NC-08)	Rep. Jim Himes (D-CT-04)	Rep. Brad Schneider (D-IL-10)
Rep. C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD-02)		Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD-03)
Rep. Matt Cartwright (D-PA-08)	Rep. Dean Phillips (D-MN-03)	

The Caucus seeks to educate members of Congress and the public about the need to expand food allergy research and support the development of new therapies. Through these activities, our collective goal is to improve the health and safety of the more than 33 million Americans (approximately 75,000+ per congressional district) suffering from potentially life-threatening food allergies. The number of food allergic children and adults has more than doubled over the past twenty years, far outpacing population growth, and every three minutes a food allergy reaction sends someone to the emergency room. Despite these concerning statistics, federal research funding for food allergies is the lowest of any major disease area.

The Congressional Food Allergy Research Caucus seeks to:

- Increase awareness in Congress and the public about the rise and prevalence of food allergies, the \$25 billion economic impact food allergies have on the American economy¹, the fact that every year more than 200,000 Americans require emergency medical care for allergic reactions to food, and that the average family spends more than \$4,000 per year in extra expenses for a food allergic child.
- Educate members of Congress, staff, and the public about the challenges disproportionately impacting underserved communities and communities of color, as the increase in children with food allergies is higher among Black children and Asian-American children.²
- Inform members of Congress, staff, and the public about the under-diagnosis and treatment of food allergies within the most vulnerable population as a recent study found that the “prevalence of food allergy among Medicaid-enrolled children across the U.S. was substantially lower (0.6 percent), compared to previous national

¹ Gupta R., Holdford D., Bilaver L., Dyer A., Holl JL., Meltzer D. *The Economic Impact of Childhood Food Allergy in the United States*. 2013;167(11):1026–1031. <https://doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2013.2376>

² Gupta, R., Springston, E., Warrier, M., Smith B., Kumar, R., Pongracic, J., Holl, J. *The prevalence, severity, and distribution of childhood food allergy in the United States*. 2011 Jul;128(1):e9-17. <https://doi:10.1542/peds.2011-0204>

estimates using parent surveys (7.6 percent) and reports of physician confirmation of food allergy (4.7 percent).”³

- Advocate for a greater federal commitment to funding food allergy research to improve the pace and release of treatments and cures as there is only FDA-approved drug and it is limited to children with a peanut allergy.
- Evaluate coverage from federal health insurance programs like Medicare and Medicaid to improve access and care for Americans from diagnosis to treatment of food allergies.

Our ask in the U.S. House: If your House member belongs to the Caucus, please thank them. If not, please ask them to join.

No ask in the U.S. Senate as the Caucus is only for U.S. House members.

³ Bilaver, L., Kanaley, M., Fierstein, J., Gupta, R. *Prevalence and Correlates of Food Allergy Among Medicaid-Enrolled United States Children*. 2020 Mar; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2020.03.005>