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The Campaign to End Antibiotic Overuse

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Keep Antibiotics Working Campaign Praises Kennedy's Introduction of Bill to Fight Antibiotic Resistance

New Report Concludes Antibiotic Use in Farm Animals Causes Antibiotic Resistance in Humans

Washington, DC - The Keep Antibiotics Working (KAW) campaign today joined the American Public Health Association (APHA) and other medical groups in endorsing a bill introduced by U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy, D-MA, to phase out the routine feeding of medically important antibiotics to healthy farm animals. The legislation, "The Preservation of Antibiotics for Human Treatment Act of 2002," is similar to a bipartisan bill pending in the U.S. House (H.R. 3804, introduced by Rep. Sherrod Brown, D-OH), which has been endorsed by the American Medical Association, KAW, and others.

The Kennedy bill introduction coincides with the release of a new report by the Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics (APUA) that concludes antibiotic use in farm animals "contributes to the growing [antibiotic resistance] problem [in humans]...limits treatment options, raises healthcare costs, and increases the number, severity and duration of infections."

"The APUA report confirms that using medically important antibiotics in healthy farm animals contributes to antibiotic resistant infections in people. The science is clear, and the time for action is now," said Tamar Barlam, M.D., an infectious disease physician at the Center for Science in the Public Interest and a former faculty member at Harvard Medical School. "Sen. Kennedy's bill will help keep antibiotics working for people who depend on antibiotics for their very survival, such as cancer patients, premature babies, and seniors, but all of us will benefit."

Both the Kennedy bill and the House bill also would ban the use of Cipro-like antibiotics to treat sick poultry because that use is promoting the development of potentially deadly Cipro-resistant food poisoning infections in people. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has proposed to ban the drug, but the sole remaining manufacturer of these drugs for poultry, the Bayer Corp., is fighting it.

The Keep Antibiotics Working campaign (www.KeepAntibioticsWorking.com) is a coalition of health, consumer, agricultural, environmental and other advocacy groups with more than nine million members dedicated to eliminating a major cause of antibiotic resistance—the inappropriate use of antibiotics in farm animals.