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December 15, 2010

The Honorable John F. Kerry  
United States Senate  
218 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-2102

Dear Senator Kerry:

We are writing to urge you to support passage of the FY 2011 omnibus appropriations bill, which includes an increase of \$750 million for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). An increase in funding for NIH is critical to improving health and encouraging innovation in fields such as antibiotic discovery and control of drug resistant infections.

Antibiotic resistance seriously threatens patient safety, public health, and national security. An APUA-initiated study at Cook County Hospital in Chicago estimates that antibiotic-resistant infections cost the U.S. healthcare system in excess of \$20 billion annually. There is also a two-fold higher death rate for patients with resistant infections and an additional 6.4-12.7 hospital days for patients with resistant versus susceptible infections. Although drug resistance has been recognized as one of the top three public health threats by the CDC, WHO and FDA, there are many fundamental scientific questions still unresolved. Compounding this problem is the pharmaceutical industry's steady abandonment of antibiotic discovery in favor of more lucrative drugs for chronic conditions.

The global Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics has been a leader in research and advocacy to improve antibiotic use and contain antibiotic resistance since its founding in 1981. As a nonprofit public health research organization, we rely on funding from organizations such as the NIH, which allows us to use our research network to better understand the causes of drug resistant infections and identify interventions.

We urge you to support the FY 2011 omnibus appropriations bill. A continuing resolution with flat funding at the FY 2010 spending level will slow research progress and result in the loss of scientific opportunities, to the detriment of health and the ability of the nation to maintain scientific leadership.

Thank you for giving priority to agencies which safeguard U.S. public health, including the CDC and FDA. Chief among these, however, is the biomedical research sponsored by an objective public oriented organization such as the National Institutes of Health. The \$750 million is a great investment.

Sincerely,



Stuart B. Levy, M.D.  
President, APUA



Kathleen T. Young  
Executive Director, APUA

cc: Bonnie L. Bassler, Ph.D.; ASM  
Roberto Kolter, Ph.D.; ASM  
Gail H. Cassell, Ph.D.; ASM