

**Rep. Louise M. Slaughter
Chairwoman, House Committee on Rules
Representing New York's 28th District**

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Slaughter Says Antibiotics Resistance Report Welcome, Long Overdue

*New Federal Report Confirms the Need for FDA Requirements
and Legislation like PAMTA*

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today said a new interagency report on antibiotic resistance is welcome and long overdue but regulations are needed to combat the highlighted risks to human health. The report is the first national action plan in 10 years to describe the government's strategic plan to combat rising antibiotic resistance.

The interagency report, "Public Health Action Plan to Combat Antimicrobial Resistance" was released yesterday by the US Department of Health and Human Services and the Center for Disease Control. It comes a week after Slaughter sent a letter to Secretary Kathleen Sebelius of Health and Human Services requesting the report's release. A copy of Slaughter's letter is included below.

"Antibiotic resistance is a major public health crisis, and our nation needs to take aggressive action in order to ensure that Americans are protected from deadly superbugs," said Slaughter. "This report is an important step forward, but it alone will not protect us against this threat. I hope that the FDA will take these findings to heart and issue requirements that will begin to reduce the threat of superbugs."

Among the reports findings is a startling statistic about MRSA, an antibiotic resistant bacteria and prime example of the growing human health threat posed by the overuse of antibiotics.

"The public health burden of methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is staggering with over 90,000 invasive MRSA infections per year estimated in the U.S. population," the report stated.

As the only microbiologist in Congress, Slaughter has been a leader on major health issues including antibiotic resistance.

Earlier this month, Slaughter took action against the threat of superbugs in our food supply by reintroducing HR 965, the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act, legislation designed to address the overuse of antibiotics in agriculture. The legislation was introduced just days

after Slaughter confirmed with the FDA that 80 percent of all antibiotics sold in the United States are sold for use in animals.

Slaughter said, “Antibiotics are used regularly and with little oversight in agriculture, and until we have effective limitations on antibiotic usage in agriculture, we will continue to battle rising antibiotic resistance. When we go to the grocery store to pick up dinner, we should be able to buy our food without worrying that eating it will expose our family to potentially deadly bacteria that no longer respond to our medical treatments.”

The report outlined the current state of antibiotic use, and outlined a plan to stop reduce the threat of superbugs in the US. It can be accessed by [clicking here](#)

Slaughter’s letter to Secretary Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services

March 11, 2011

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

We appreciate your dedication to fighting the public health threat of antibiotic resistance. Given the national and international rise in rates of antibiotic resistance, we urge the speedy release of the “Public Health Action Plan to Combat Antimicrobial Resistance” – nearly ten years after the last national strategic action plan. We cannot wait any longer for a national plan to counter rising antibiotic resistance, and we urge more frequent updates to the national strategy to combat antibiotic resistance.

We have not had a new strategic action plan on antibiotic resistance since 2001, when the Interagency Task force first released a “Public Health Action Plan to Combat Antibiotic Resistance. While annual updates have been published every year up to 2008, these updates fail to provide a comprehensive and strategic overview of progress, analyze gaps, or propose next steps.

On December of 2007, the Interagency Task Force started to develop a revised “Public Health Action Plan to Combat Antimicrobial Resistance”. Unfortunately, the updated Action Plan has not yet been released, over three years later.

Given the human and monetary implications of antibiotic resistance, this delay is concerning.

Every year, two million Americans acquire bacterial infections during their hospital stay, and 90,000 will die from them. 70 percent of these infections will be resistant to the drugs commonly used to treat them.

Drug resistance prolongs the length, cost, and severity of the illness, raising health care costs and reducing health outcomes. In the 1990s, the Institute of Medicine estimated that health care costs were upwards of \$5 billion; more recent cost estimates have climbed even higher. According to a recent peer-reviewed article published in the *Clinical Infectious Diseases* journal, antibiotic resistant infections extended hospital stays between six and thirteen days as well as increasing mortality. The total health care cost of antibiotic resistant infections in the United States is estimated to be between \$16.6 and 24 billion dollars annually.

We cannot wait any longer for a serious national strategy to preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics and develop new ones. We look forward to working with you to improve public health.

Sincerely,

Louise M. Slaughter
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Janice Schakowsky
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Jared Polis
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

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