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AAP APPLAUDS FDA EFFORTS TO PROTECT EFFECTIVENESS OF CRITICAL ANTIBIOTICS

Washington, DC—The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced today that it will re-issue its ban on medically unnecessary uses of cephalosporin drugs in food-producing animals. The FDA first issued a withdrawal order for such uses of these antibiotics in July 2008. Unfortunately, the FDA withdrew the order only three months later, before it could go into effect. Since that time, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and other public health advocates have repeatedly called for the FDA to re-issue this prohibition to preserve the effectiveness of cephalosporins in treating pediatric patients.

“The AAP applauds the FDA for its decision to protect the usefulness of critical antibiotics and preserve the life-saving medicines pediatricians rely on to treat many serious childhood infections,” said AAP President Robert W. Block, MD, FAAP. “We are pleased that the FDA has heeded the call of the public health community and taken this important first step forward to protect children’s health.”

FDA’s new ban will allow these drugs to continue being used for approved indications that have been shown to be safe and effective, while also helping to ensure that they retain their effectiveness in treating dangerous childhood infections. Cephalosporins are especially important for children, as these drugs are used to treat many severe childhood infections, including bacterial meningitis, infections of the bone, urinary tract, and upper respiratory system, and infections associated with cancer. In addition, unlike many other types of commonly used antibiotics, cephalosporins carry no warnings or precautions for pediatric use.

“Pediatricians are already limited in the number and types of antibiotics that we can use to treat ill children, and when one type of antibiotic is found to be resistant to a strain of an infection, some of our sickest young patients are left without life-saving treatment options,” said Dr. Block. “The AAP commends the FDA for making this crucial investment in our children’s health.”

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The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.