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## **Communicable Disease Experts Endorse Federal Legislation to Curb Antibiotic Use in Livestock, Poultry**

Washington, DC — The Keep Antibiotics Working Coalition (KAW) today applauded the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), an organization representing 8,000 infectious disease physicians and scientists, for endorsing the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA) (*S. 742/H.R. 2562*), legislation that would curb the use of medically important antibiotics as feed additives for agricultural animals.

These additives are not used to treat sick animals; rather, they are used to promote slightly faster growth and to compensate for stressful, crowded conditions at intensive livestock and poultry facilities. According to Martin Blaser, M.D., the president of IDSA, PAMTA “will help preserve the effectiveness of lifesaving antimicrobial drugs” in human medicine. IDSA’s endorsement was set forth in letters to PAMTA’s lead Senate and House sponsors, Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Representative Sherrod Brown (D-OH).

“Physicians, nurses and now infectious disease professionals are all calling for federal laws to curb the needless use of antibiotics in animals raised for food because it appears to threaten how well we will be able to treat our human patients with antibiotics,” said David Wallinga, M.D., a physician with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

IDSA joins the American Medical Association, the American Nurses Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Geriatrics Society, the American Public Health Association, the National Association of County and City Health Officials, the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, and more than 350 other health, consumer, environmental, and sustainable agriculture organizations that have called for an end to the routine use of medically important antibiotics as feed additives. In 2003, the National Academy of Sciences called for “substantial efforts” to reduce agricultural overuse of antibiotics.

Dr. Blaser also notes, “There is growing concern among infectious diseases professionals that antimicrobial agents’ effectiveness in treating life-threatening infections is becoming compromised by increasing bacterial resistance to these therapies.” (The term “antimicrobial” includes antibiotics and other pathogen-fighting compounds.)

“It’s time to get this federal legislation off the back burner,” said Dr. Margaret Mellon, Food and Environment Program Director for the Union of Concerned Scientists. “Further delay will only mean more drug-resistant diseases, higher medical costs and more human suffering.”

PAMTA would withdraw FDA approvals for feed-additive use of seven specific antibiotics classes: penicillins, tetracyclines, macrolides, lincosamides, streptogramins, aminoglycosides, and sulfonamides through amendment of the Federal Food Drug and Cosmetic Act, unless FDA finds that such uses are safe based on current scientific understanding. Each of these classes contains antibiotics also used in human medicine.

Dr. Wallinga and Dr. Mellon sit on the steering committee of KAW, a coalition of health, consumer, agricultural, environmental and other advocacy groups with more than 9 million members whose primary goal is to combat the antibiotic resistance crisis in human medicine by ending the overuse and misuse of antibiotics in animal agriculture.