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## **AAFA Applauds FDA First Steps Toward Declaring Sesame as Major Allergen**

**October 30, 2018** – Washington, DC – The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), the premiere nonprofit representing patients with asthma and allergies, applauds the recent request for information and statement from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) demonstrating its commitment to explore the classification of sesame as a major allergen.

Based on reports of adverse reactions from our community of over 55,000 food allergy patients, AAFA has advocated for the inclusion of sesame as a major allergen. For many years AAFA has collected patient and expert testimony and contributed to FDA hearings on new treatment options for asthma and allergies. In August of this year AAFA met with FDA to present a selection of sesame reaction stories. The outcome was a request for more. AAFA then put out a survey to collect information from our community, amplified by coalition partners Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE) and the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). To date, over 150 patients have submitted sesame allergy stories.

Kenneth Mendez, AAFA President and CEO, states “We applaud FDA’s Request for Information on the prevalence and severity of sesame allergy in the United States. Though sesame ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in prevalence behind the top 8 allergens, manufacturers are not required to clearly label sesame on their products.” He continues “The stories we hear about life threatening situations, anaphylactic reactions, 911 calls, and emergency room visits from unlabeled sesame products or cross contamination make this the highest priority for those with sesame allergy. American patients deserve clear labeling requirements on food - similar to Canada, the EU, and other countries.”

AAFA is encouraged that FDA is taking this threat seriously and moving towards finding a solution. We look forward to continued work with the administration for the proper allergen labeling of sesame.

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## About AAFA

Celebrating 65 years of service, AAFA is the oldest and largest non-profit patient organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with asthma, allergies and related conditions through research, education, advocacy and support. AAFA provides practical information and community-based services through its digital communities and network of chapters and support groups. Through its [Kids with Food Allergies division](#), AAFA offers the most extensive online support community for families of children with food allergies. AAFA also helps consumers identify products suitable for those with asthma and allergies through the [asthma & allergy friendly® Certification Program](#). For more information, visit [www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org).

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