



New Hampshire House of Representatives
Commerce and Consumer Affairs Committee

January 16, 2020

Dear Members of the Committee,

On behalf of AAFA, the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, I am writing in strong support of HB 1102, an Act requiring food service establishments to establish food allergy awareness procedures. AAFA is the leading patient organization for people with asthma and allergies, and the oldest asthma and allergy patient group in the world.

Food allergies are affecting a growing number of American children and adults. Between four and six percent of all children in the U.S. have food allergies. Exposure to the allergen can cause severe reactions, including anaphylaxis and, in rare cases, death. Because there is no cure for food allergies, awareness and preparedness are key for protecting health and saving lives.

Adverse reactions to foods at restaurants are common, and account for a large share of food allergy fatalities.^{1,2} Going to restaurants can therefore cause significant stress for families managing food allergies.³

Children and adults with food allergies want to participate in the special occasions and everyday social engagements that take place in restaurants. However, many restaurants and restaurant workers are not aware of, or are not using, practices to improve food allergy safety.⁴ Making restaurants safer could help prevent allergic reactions and deaths, and let people with food allergies engage more fully in social activities with their family and friends with less fear and stress.

We therefore strongly support the bill to improve allergy awareness and safe practices in New Hampshire restaurants. Like those passed in several other states, the law would increase both consumer and employee awareness of food allergies and safe preparation techniques. The availability of a voluntary “food allergy friendly” designation would allow consumers to identify those restaurants with a particular commitment to transparency and safe practices for their food-allergic customers.

¹ Wanich, N., C. Weiss, T. J. Furlong, and S. H. Sicherer. 2008. Food allergic customer (FAC) experience in restaurants and food establishments. *J. Allergy Clin. Immunol.* 121:S182.

² Weiss, C., and A. Munoz-Furlong. 2008. Fatal food allergy reactions in restaurants and food-service establishments: strategies for prevention. *Food Prot. Trends* 28:657–661.

³ Begen et al., “Parents’ and caregivers’ experiences and behaviours when eating out with children with a food hypersensitivity.” [BMC Public Health](#). 2018; 18: 38.

⁴ Young et al., “A systematic review and meta-regression of the knowledge, practices, and training of restaurant and food service personnel toward food allergies and Celiac disease” [PLoS One](#). 2018; 13(9)



Asthma and Allergy
Foundation of America

AAFA strongly encourages the legislature to pass this bill into law. Thank you very much for your work to protect the health and wellbeing of New Hampshire children and adults with food allergies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kenneth Mendez'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'K' and 'M'.

Kenneth Mendez
President and Chief Executive Officer
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America