

July 1, 2021

The Honorable Janet Woodcock
Acting Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration
10903 New Hampshire Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20993-0002

Dear Acting Commissioner Woodcock,

The American Heart Association (AHA), Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) and Sustainable Food Policy Alliance (SFPA), including member companies Danone North America, Mars, Incorporated, Nestlé USA and Unilever United States, thank you for your service as Acting Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). We write today to advocate for the swift release of the final voluntary sodium reduction targets, which were first issued in draft form in 2016 and are expected to be finalized by the end of June 2022, according to a June 29 announcement from FDA.

While our organizations are different and represent varied viewpoints, we have come together because we all continue to be concerned about the rise in obesity rates and other chronic diseases, and independently advocate for policies that promote health, prevent disease, and advance sound nutrition science. We all believe it is necessary to set an ambitious agenda to improve the food system to support healthy eating and recognize the role the food industry can and should play in advancing nutrition.

With those goals in mind, our organizations are strongly aligned with FDA and nutrition experts that reducing sodium in the food supply can be a powerful public health action to prevent costly diet-related disease in this country. Reducing sodium intake can help lower blood pressure, a leading risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Studies have shown that measures to reduce sodium in Americans' diets stand to save well over 100,000 lives over the next ten years.¹ As such, we write today to advocate for your agency to prioritize the release of the final voluntary sodium reduction targets.

We are concerned about the delayed release of the voluntary sodium reduction targets. While SFPA member companies have taken steps to reduce sodium across their product portfolios, to make a meaningful impact it is imperative that other food manufacturers and government agencies like the FDA act as well. This guidance is key to ensure that other companies across the food industry may catch up and that we can continue to see essential progress in this area. FDA's final voluntary sodium reduction targets are essential for businesses to track and meet current and future sodium reduction progress and goals, assist product planning and contribute to overall public health improvements – a goal we know the FDA supports.

Thank you again for your efforts to promote policies that will support health and prevent disease. We hope that you will move expeditiously to release the final voluntary sodium reduction targets as soon as possible, and we are pleased to serve as a resource to you on this important issue as you move forward.

¹ Danaei G, Ding EL, Mozaffarian D, Taylor B, Rehm J, Murray CJ, Ezzati M. The preventable causes of death in the United States: comparative risk assessment of dietary, lifestyle, and metabolic risk factors. PLoS Med. 2009(Apr 28);6(4):e1000058.

Sincerely,

Sustainable Food Policy Alliance, including
member companies Danone North America,
Mars, Incorporated, Nestlé USA and Unilever
United States

American Heart Association

Center for Science in the Public Interest

CC:

Ambassador Susan Rice, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, Domestic Policy Council,
Executive Office of the President

Kelliann Blazek, Special Assistant to the President for Agriculture and Rural Policy, Domestic Policy
Council, Executive Office of the President

Shalanda Young, Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President