

Senator Gary Peters  
724 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Peters,

Imagine a newborn baby--the picture of health--coming home from the hospital, ready for its first feeding. The eager new mom, formula in hand, is waiting to feed her child--the apple of her eye. However, shortly after the bottle is finished, the baby promptly begins vomiting and develops constant diarrhea. Nothing you do helps; your precious baby keeps getting sicker and you just don't know why.

Food protein-induced enterocolitis syndrome (FPIES) is a growing problem that is becoming prominent in children all across America. FPIES is a rare food allergy that occurs primarily in children, starting from birth to about 3 years of age. It causes chronic, often severe, vomiting and diarrhea. Children afflicted with FPIES struggle to reach growth milestones and develop malnutrition and lethargy when not able to get the proper nutrition from food. Many symptoms of FPIES, including chronic vomiting, diarrhea, dehydration, lethargy, changes in blood pressure, body temperature fluctuations, weight loss, and stunted growth, are similar to those of the stomach flu. Therefore, many parents un-awaringly dismiss their child's symptoms and reaction to certain foods as the stomach flu, thinking it will go away in a few days time. However, these symptoms become persistent and allergy tests come back negative. Only then do parents realize that there's something more to this story. By then, FPIES has taken its toll on the child and it is extremely difficult to bring them back to a healthy standpoint. In order to avoid numerous other children having FPIES unknowingly and to provide special care to those who have FPIES now, Global FPIES Day should be made a National Health Observance day.

According to the FPIES foundation, *"If Global FPIES Day becomes a National Health Observance Day, it will give the FPIES community a strong platform from which to **advocate for specific changes** for our affected children, as well as goals of promoting FPIES education for medical professional and the community as a whole."* (FPIES Foundation, 2016). Formulas like Neocate Junior Unflavored for children with FPIES are expensive, and take a great toll on families with children afflicted with FPIES. A parent should not have to choose between keeping their child healthy or keeping a roof over his head. If Global FPIES Day became a National Health Observance Day, families with FPIES could be given a voice, and benefits like formula coverage for children with FPIES could be petitioned. However, without that strong platform to stand on, advocates for FPIES won't have a voice, and awareness can be spread only so much by word of mouth. With this day, parents and caregivers would come to know the symptoms of FPIES, and if suspected, can take their child to the hospital straight away instead of waiting for days because they thought it was something else. Parents can be educated on what food triggers, which are foods/ingredients that cause FPIES symptoms in the child, their child may have.

It is clear from the evidence that the benefits of making Global FPIES Day a National Health Observance Day are too powerful and promising to ignore. Countless children and infants would be saved from the torment of being ill over and over again. Additionally, families who are aware of their children having FPIES could be given the proper health care benefits their child deserves and can prevent further harm from the disease. With Global FPIES Day as a National Health Observance Day, new mothers all across the world can be educated about Food protein-induced enterocolitis syndrome, its symptoms, and which foods to avoid in particular. With the best interests of these children and their parents whom you represent, please support the making of Global FPIES Day as an official National Health Observance Day.

Sincerely,

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