

Resolution Concerning the Health Threat of Antibiotic-resistant Bacteria

Adopted November 17, 2015

WHEREAS, antibiotics are critical to protecting the public's health by transforming mankind's ability to treat infections — saving millions of lives each year in the United States and around the world; and

WHEREAS, medical and public health experts have found that antibiotic resistance represents a current threat to the public's health; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that in the United States, more than two million people are sickened every year with antibiotic-resistant infections, with at least 23,000 dying as a result; and

WHEREAS, The American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, Infectious Diseases Society of America, and many other leading U.S. medical and scientific organizations have stated: "The evidence is so strong of a link between misuse of antibiotics in food animals and human antibiotic resistance that FDA and Congress should be acting much more boldly and urgently to protect these vital drugs for human illness. ... Overuse and misuse of important antibiotics in food animals must end in order to protect human health"; and

WHEREAS, the CDC estimates that as much as fifty percent of the prescriptions in hospitals and doctor's offices are unnecessary or inappropriately prescribed, including prescriptions to patients demanding treatment for conditions such as a cold when antibiotics are not needed and will not help; and

WHEREAS, according to the *FDA Annual Report on Antimicrobials Sold or Distributed for Food-Producing Animals in 2011*, there were over 29.9 million pounds of antibiotics sold in 2011 for use on industrial farms – the most ever reported and four times the amount sold to treat sick people; and

WHEREAS, food producers routinely provide antibiotics to healthy animals on a daily basis for growth promotion and disease prevention as a compensation for the overcrowded and unsanitary conditions in which the animals are bred and slaughtered; and

WHEREAS, on June 2, 2015, President Obama issued a Presidential Memorandum Creating a Preference for Meat and Poultry Produced According to Responsible Antibiotic-Use Policies; and

WHEREAS, consumers across the United States are increasingly demanding meat and poultry raised without antibiotics; and

1. **WHEREAS**, the Urban School Food Alliance, comprised of the school districts in the cities of New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, Orlando and Dallas, have established an antibiotic-free standard for the purchase of poultry products 500 million meals a year to over 2.8 million children in over 4,500 schools; and

WHEREAS, food producers, restaurants and food service providers, including a number of local companies, are responding to this consumer demand by providing some or all of their menu items raised without antibiotics; and

WHEREAS, bacteria will continue to find ways of resisting the antibiotics developed by humans, which is why aggressive action is needed now to keep new resistance from developing and to prevent the resistance that already exists from spreading; and

WHEREAS, the rapid rise of antimicrobial resistance requires a coordinated response across many lines of effort, and therefore requires strong action by the federal government; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Arlington County Board:

1. Supports efforts at the federal level to develop, promote and implement activities to ensure the responsible use of antibiotics in human health care and food production; and
2. Applauds the Food and Drug Administrations' recent issuance of Guidance for Industry #213 and the Veterinary Feed Directive Final rule, which eliminates the approval to use antibiotics used in humans from being used for growth promotion in food producing animals; and
3. Applauds the Administration's development of the September 2014 *National Strategy to Combat Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria* and the March 2015 *National Action Plan for Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria*; and
4. Supports legislative efforts to prevent the nontherapeutic use of antibiotics in food production, such as S. 621, the Preventing Antibiotic Resistance Act of 2015 and H.R. 1552, the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act of 2015; and
5. The Arlington County Board directs the County Manager to:
 - a. Establish a tiebreaker preference in County procurement policies for the purchase of meat and poultry that has been raised according to responsible antibiotic use policies for County programs and services; and
 - b. Work with the Arlington County Public Schools to assess the feasibility of instituting a similar standard in the School Lunch Program; and
 - c. Direct the Department of Human Services to provide information and resources to remind health care providers and consumers of the threat of antibiotic resistance and the standards established by the CDC for antibiotic stewardship programs; and
 - d. Work with other local jurisdictions in the region, through the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, to consider similar joint purchasing agreements on a regional level.