



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

African American Physicians Endorse the FDA's Proposal to Ban Trans Fats: A Life Saving Measure for Many African Americans

The National Medical Association believes a ban on trans fats could save lives by lowering the risk of heart disease in African Americans.

Silver Spring, MD-(November 19, 2013)—The National Medical Association (NMA), the nation's oldest and largest organization of African American physicians, endorses a tentative determination issued last week by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs), the primary dietary source of industrially produced trans fatty acids, are not "generally recognized as safe" for use in any foods. If FDA finalizes its determination, food manufacturers would no longer be permitted to sell PHOs, either directly or as ingredients in another food product, without prior FDA approval for use as a food additive.

The NMA agrees that trans fats—which are found in commercially produced baked goods such as crackers, cookies and cakes and many fried foods such as doughnuts and French fries—are not safe for foods. NMA President Dr. Michael A. LeNoir says, "FDA's recommendation is long overdue. Eliminating trans fats in the diet will have a profound impact on reducing heart disease in many of the patients we serve."

FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg said the move to ban trans fats could prevent 20,000 heart attacks and 7,000 deaths each year. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), African Americans are nearly twice as likely as whites to die from preventable heart disease and stroke from cholesterol build up secondary to among other things, the consumption of trans fats.

"As we approach the upcoming holiday season, we will continue to encourage our members to talk with their patients about the importance preparing their favorite African American dishes in ways that will protect them from heart disease and strokes." said Dr. LeNoir.

The NMA plans to file comments in support of the proposal during FDA's two-month comment period. "Our leadership believes it is imperative that we work with our member physicians and our patients to encourage African Americans to make healthier choices by eliminating trans fat consumption," stated Dr. LeNoir.

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Founded in 1895, the National Medical Association (NMA) is the nation's oldest and largest medical association representing the interests of more than 35,000 African American physicians and their patients. The NMA repeatedly advocates for policies that would assure equitable and quality health care for all people.