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October 25, 2016

The Honorable Jackie Speier
United States House of Representatives
2465 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Speier:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to express the AMA's support for H.R. 1139, the "Detergent Poisoning and Child Safety Act of 2015" (Detergent PACS Act). This legislation would require the Consumer Product Safety Commission to establish safety standards for liquid detergent packets to protect children who are younger than five years of age from injury or illness.

Laundry detergent packets, also known as pods, can be colorful and look like candy, and pose a serious poisoning risk to young children. In 2012, the American Association of Poison Control Centers highlighted the dangers of laundry packets, especially to children five years of age and younger. That year, Poison Centers received over 6,000 laundry packet exposure calls related to children five and under. That number has continued to rise, with 12,954 exposures reported in 2015 and 8,845 exposures reported through September 30th for 2016. A study examining data from the National Poison Data System from the years 2012 and 2013 highlighted that during those two years, children younger than three years of age accounted for 73.5 percent of cases. The major route of exposure was ingestion, accounting for 79.7 percent of cases. Among exposed children, 4.4 percent were hospitalized and 7.5 percent experienced a moderate or major medical outcome.

The pods are presenting more serious symptoms when ingested than traditional laundry detergent. Given the continued danger, Consumer Reports made the decision to not include pods on their list of recommended laundry detergents, and they strongly urge households where children younger than six years of age are present to skip them altogether. The Detergent PACS Act would help protect children from poisoning by packet products by requiring that any final rule that is promulgated to include requirements for special packaging and warning labels; standards to make the color and design of packets less attractive to children; and liquid composition standards to make the consequences of exposure less severe.

Thank you for your leadership in sponsoring this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Madara, MD