Healthy Living

Sounding The Alarm On Antibiotics

Antibiotic overuse in any setting breeds deadly, antibiotic-resistant bacteria that put public health at risk.

Alarmed by the fact that 70 percent of medically important antibiotics in the U.S. are used on livestock and poultry—not humans—doctors and nurses are coming forward to raise the alarm about the misuse of our life-saving medicines in agriculture.

To make sure elected and corporate decision-makers hear from these experts about antibiotic resistance and what can be done to stop it, U.S. PIRG Education Fund created the Health Professional Action Network.

Already, more than 40,000 health professionals have signed on, and a group of doctors worked with us this summer to produce a video interview series about antibiotic resistance that is reaching thousands online.

As the biggest purchaser of beef in the country, a strong commitment from McDonald’s could change the entire food industry and save lives.

Citizen support also gives us the resources we need to advocate directly in the halls of power. In June, we joined other groups in support of a federal bill to enforce duration limits on antibiotics given to livestock, just like we require in human medicine.

Together with you, we’ll keep working at the state, national and corporate levels to protect the health of future generations.

21st Century Transportation

Colorado Moves Toward Cleaner Cars

In June, Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper kicked off the adoption of advanced clean car standards in our state. This action comes as the Trump administration rolls back federal clean car rules that have resulted in improved fuel efficiency in cars.

CoPIRG joined with leaders from environmental, consumer and health groups to make the case that adopting the standards would provide strong health safeguards from vehicle air pollution, cut greenhouse gas emissions, and save Coloradans money at the pump.

“Inefficient cars are just wasteful—they hurt our health by producing unnecessary pollution, and cost consumers at the pump,” said Danny Katz, state director of CoPIRG. “As technology advances, we need to take advantage of cleaner, more efficient cars. That’s why we applaud the governor’s action to make Colorado a leader in this area.”
New Economy

Right To Repair Is The Fix We Need

If a product you own breaks, you should be able to fix it or find someone who can. But products ranging from dishwashers to smartphones are purposefully made to be difficult, if not impossible, to repair.

On July 21, the Consumer Bureau celebrated a bittersweet seventh birthday. While Congress was making various anti-consumer moves, more than 100 groups joined CoPIRG Foundation in sending consumers a message of hope.

In a video, CoPIRG Foundation’s Mike Litt criticized the slowdown in consumer protections at the Consumer Bureau—but said the ability of the agency to protect consumers is largely still intact, thanks to our advocates, members and allies.

“As long as consumers keep speaking up, a future CFPB director will be able to ensure a fair and transparent marketplace for consumers and businesses alike,” said Litt.

Zero Out Toxics

Companies Move Toward Toxic-Free Products

For Mother’s Day this year, CoPIRG and our national network sent more than 6,000 petition signatures to L’Oréal—the manufacturer behind brands like Garnier and Maybelline—urging the company to disclose the fragrance chemicals used in its products.

More than 3,000 chemicals can be used to make fragrance—some of which have been linked to cancer and reproductive and respiratory problems. Just weeks after our petition delivery, L’Oréal announced it would make this disclosure.

In July, we scored another victory when Johnson & Johnson agreed to disclose fragrance ingredients in its baby products.

“We’re seeing a shift in the personal care products industry toward greater transparency,” said CoPIRG’s Dev Gowda, director of our campaign for toxic-free products. “Consumers are demanding it, and the industry is starting to listen.”

21st Century Transportation

$100 Million For Safer Transportation

Thanks to member support, CoPIRG recently helped place $100 million worth of statewide transit, walking and biking projects on our state’s priority construction list. The investments were identified by our staff after meeting with dozens of local communities across the state.

The projects include improvements to rapid transit in Boulder, Longmont and Louisville; pedestrian and bike infrastructure in Grand Junction; a pedestrian underpass in Durango; and funding to make Denver’s Federal Boulevard, one of the most dangerous roads in Colorado, safer for pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders.

Together, we’ll continue working to modernize our transportation systems and move away from outdated methods of getting around that threaten our health and the health of our planet.

Invest fossil fuel free. Because her future matters.
Thanks To You

PIRG Consumer Watchdog

Protecting Consumers In The Digital Age

Why do we let companies like Facebook and Equifax, who have done so much to advance digital technology, be so careless with our personal information? And why are we doing so little to hold them accountable when they make a mistake, or allow identity thieves to access our personal information?

These questions drive our national network’s efforts to implement better consumer protections and privacy laws in Colorado and across the country—work that is only possible thanks to members and supporters like you.

At the national level, while CoPIRG and our network are excited to see bipartisan action for free credit freezes—an important protection that was included in a bill passed in May—the new federal law unfortunately preempts stronger state laws.

As our advocates told The New York Times, this law could undermine consumer protections that our affiliate groups helped establish in Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Oregon and Washington over the past year.

With support from our members, we will keep encouraging consumers to use credit freezes to protect themselves, and continue looking for new opportunities to push for stronger protections against identity theft.

Progress In The States

We’ve also made important progress on data privacy at the state level, where protections can often lay the groundwork for federal action.

This summer, CoPIRG worked with state Reps. Cole Wist and Jeff Bridges to pass legislation that will help prevent future data breaches and hold negligent companies accountable.

Specifically, the bill requires companies to dispose of personal identifying information when it’s no longer needed, and to notify consumers directly of a data breach within 30 days of discovering their information might have been stolen. In addition, companies will need to notify the Colorado Attorney General’s office so they can take appropriate action.

Permission To Use Our Data

To bring current privacy laws up to date with our digital world, CoPIRG is recommending Congress pass a privacy bill of rights similar to the General Data Protection Regulation, a new privacy law that went into effect in the European Union in May.

“A cornerstone of the new European law is the requirement to obtain permission from consumers before their data can be used. In order to guarantee privacy from companies, Congress should pass legislation that requires permission from American consumers too,” said CoPIRG’s Mike Litt.

Thanks To You

Dear CoPIRG member,

It’s terrifying, but simple: If we continue misusing antibiotics, common infections could become a lot more deadly.

In July, CoPIRG and our national network kicked off efforts to knock on 450,000 doors to educate people across the country about the overuse of our life-saving antibiotics in agriculture.

So far, tens of thousands have signed our petition asking McDonald’s to only buy beef and pork from farms that use antibiotics responsibly. By summer’s end, that number will have climbed to nearly 80,000, adding the power of consumer opinion to our research and advocacy.

Sure, there are food industry interests, as well as the power of “that’s just the way the world works,” standing in the way of solutions. But CoPIRG stands for two different forces: the idea that there’s a public interest—a position that benefits all of us—and the idea that change is always possible.

This approach, combined with support from members like you, has helped us convince some of the country’s top restaurants to phase antibiotics out of their supply chains, and we hope McDonald’s will soon do the same.

From addressing antibiotic resistance, to protecting consumers in the financial marketplace, to getting toxic products off store shelves, we stand up for you—but we couldn’t do it without you.

Thank you,

Danny Katz, State Director
info@copirg.org
It’s Time To Stop Trashing Our Future

Nothing we use for a few minutes should threaten our health or pollute our future for hundreds of years—especially when we don’t need it.

But polystyrene foam, the stuff most of us call Styrofoam, persists in the environment for centuries—meaning every bit of it ever made is still out there clogging our landfills, littering our streets, and polluting our parks, rivers and oceans.

CoPIRG supporters like you have already sent tens of thousands of comments asking state lawmakers to eliminate polystyrene cups and containers for good, but we’re just getting started.

If we’re successful in banning single-use polystyrene items, we’ll be moving one step closer to zero waste. We’ll see cleaner parks, streets and beaches, less overall waste choking our planet, and a more sustainable future to leave to our children and grandchildren. This is something we can do right now, with your support.