



THE VOICE OF FOOD RETAIL

Feeding Families  Enriching Lives

March 7, 2017

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Foxx,

The Food Marketing Institute (FMI) writes to express appreciation and support for the Preserving Employee Wellness Programs Act, H.R. 1313, to restore certainty and viability to employee wellness programs.

FMI proudly advocates on behalf of food retailers and wholesalers. FMI's members operate nearly 40,000 retail food stores and 25,000 pharmacies, representing a combined annual sales volume of almost \$770 billion. FMI membership covers the spectrum of diverse venues where food is sold, including single owner grocery stores, large multi-store supermarket chains, mixed retail stores, and food wholesalers. Food retailers and wholesalers employ 3.5 million full-time, part-time and seasonal workers—many operating under fluctuating work schedules in order to meet employee needs and varying consumer demand.

For many FMI food retail members, wellness programs are a critical component to employee benefits, not only because they are valued by employees, but also as a means for both the employee and employer to maintain healthcare costs while improving peoples' health. The supermarket industry has embraced and been an innovator in encouraging health and wellness both as employers and as retailers. According to FMI's 2014 Report on Retailer Contributions to Health & Wellness, 54 percent of food retailers have an established health and wellness program for both customers and employees, 95 percent of stores employ dietitians at the corporate, regional and store levels, and 78 percent of the respondents view in-store health and wellness programs as a responsibility to their communities. Recent regulatory hurdles have brought uncertainty and stymied innovations into health and wellness plan development, including those outside of group health plans.

The Preserving Employee Wellness Programs Act, H.R. 1313, would restore statutory award limits, as well as provide certainty and protections for employee wellness programs that are HIPAA-compliant, including those offered outside of a group health plan.

We appreciate your introduction and support actions to move this legislation forward.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hatcher
Chief Public Policy Officer & Senior Vice President, Government Relations
Food Marketing Institute