

Dear Neighbor,

The Jack-in-the-Box E. coli outbreak 30 years ago caused the deaths of four children, permanently injured 178 people, and sickened over 500 people across four states. Most of the people affected were part of our most vulnerable population: children under 10 years old. As a result of the outbreak, some of the survivors suffer from lifetime injuries such as asthma and brain and kidney damage (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 1993).

In 2023, an estimated 76 million people still become sick with foodborne illness every year from bacteria and viruses such as E. coli, Salmonella, Listeria, Campylobacter, and norovirus. Approximately 300,000 of these people require hospitalization and nearly 5,000 people die from foodborne illness (CDC, 2018). The health-related economic cost of foodborne illness is estimated to be approximately \$152 billion every year with an average of \$1,850 per illness (Produce Safety Project, 2010).

Foodborne illness is preventable.

I rely on public health and food safety professionals to make sure that when I eat out in my community, I will not become sick from foodborne illnesses. The public health workforce has shrunk by more than 56,000 local positions and 10,000 state jobs over the past decade due to limited funding (DeSalvo et al., 2021; Trust for America's Health, 2020). To keep our communities safe and healthy, and to reduce the economic burden of foodborne illness, we need to:

- Ensure our state, local, tribal, and territorial health departments are sufficiently staffed and trained.
- Adopt up-to-date, evidence-based regulations.
- Ensure adequate preventative measures are taken, such as providing effective training and resources.

With my signature below, I attest to my belief that food safety and the professionals who make sure our food is safe are important. Furthermore, as a resident of this county, I am in favor of providing funding and support for food safety programs because it is good for me and my community.

I feel my family and my community are worth the investment.

Signed,



References

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