



TFAH DECRIES DRAMATIC CUTS TO CDC CORE PROGRAMS; PRESIDENT'S BUDGET OUT OF TOUCH WITH AMERICANS' HEALTH ANXIETIES ACCORDING TO NEW POLL

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WASHINGTON, February 6, 2006 – Trust for America's Health (TFAH) today issued an analysis of the President's fiscal year 2007 budget that finds a proposed cut to core Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) programs of more than four percent from FY 2006, and nearly eight percent when compared to the FY 2005 funding levels. Some programs that would receive cuts include obesity prevention, birth defects prevention, environmental health, and injury prevention and control.

TFAH today also released the third annual edition of a poll that examines Americans' anxieties about health problems. It reveals that cancer continues to be the number one concern for voters, with 26 percent ranking it as their top health concern. Heart disease ranks second (15 percent), obesity ranks third (14 percent), and a worldwide flu pandemic ranks fourth (10 percent).

“The dramatic cuts proposed to programs aimed at preventing cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and birth defects will come at a serious cost to our country's health,” said Shelley A. Hearne, DrPH, Executive Director of TFAH. “It is an unfortunate choice given that chronic diseases are now the major source of illness and health cost in the U.S.”

TFAH's budget review also determined the proposed funds for bioterrorism preparedness remain virtually level from FY 2006, yet represent a cut of over 10 percent compared to FY 2005.

The President called for \$2.65 billion in FY 2007 to be allocated to support pandemic flu preparedness activities across the Department of Health and Human Services. These funds are essential to fill gaps in vaccine development and production capacity, stockpiling antiviral medication and other medical supplies, contingency planning, risk communications, surge capacity, and diagnostics and reagents.

“The President should be commended for putting pandemic flu preparedness high on his list of budget priorities,” said Hearne.

These funds do not include resources to implement the rest of the forthcoming government-wide pandemic plan, which is expected to be finalized soon, for the full range of federal agencies that will be playing vital roles in preparing for a potential outbreak.

According to the health anxieties poll, 55 percent of voters believe that the U.S. government is unready to face a worldwide flu outbreak, 54 percent say the country is unprepared for another disaster like Hurricane Katrina, and 51 percent indicate the nation is not ready to handle an attack on the food supply.

African Americans are more likely to express fear about biological terrorism (60 percent concerned versus 50 percent) and flu epidemics (71 percent concerned versus 57 percent) than the rest of the population. Further, African Americans express the least confidence in the country's readiness to respond to crises. Seventy-three percent of African Americans believe the U.S. is unprepared for a pandemic flu

outbreak compared to 55 percent of the rest of the population, and 71 percent of African Americans feel the nation is unprepared for a natural disaster like Hurricane Katrina versus 54 percent.

The full poll, conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research of 1,000 adults, including 814 registered voters in January 2006, is available at www.healthyamericans.org

Some of the major proposed cuts to the CDC budget include:

- Zeroing out of the prevention health and health services block grants (totaling \$99 million) to support state public health programs, which compounds the impact of the disease-specific cuts;
- 12 percent cut to birth defects and developmental disabilities programs;
- 6 percent cut to environmental health programs;
- More than a 2 percent cut to chronic disease prevention and health promotion programs; and
- 2 percent cut to occupational safety and health.

Trust for America's Health is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to saving lives by protecting the health of every community and working to make disease prevention a national priority.

www.healthyamericans.org