



TFAH Applauds Release of CDC's State-Specific Public Health Emergency Preparedness Report

Media Contacts: Laura Segal (202) 223-9870 x 27 or lsegal@tfah.org

Washington, D.C., February 20, 2008 – The following is a statement from Jeff Levi, PhD, Executive Director of Trust for America's Health (TFAH) in response to today's release of *Public Health Preparedness: Mobilizing State by State -- A CDC Report on the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Cooperative Agreement*

“The CDC's release of information about progress states have made to improve public health emergency preparedness is an important step forward for transparency and accountability. The report demonstrates the hard work and accomplishments of our nation's public health agencies.

Americans deserve to know how their taxpayer dollars are being used to help protect them against health threats. This represents the first time the CDC has released details about the progress each state has made with the funds allocated for public health preparedness after the September 11, 2001 and anthrax tragedies. By providing information about progress as well as shortcomings, this report allows policymakers and the public to better understand the need for a committed, sustained investment to maintain and improve preparedness to respond to public health emergencies. We look forward to future reports that contain more timely information that closely tracks the performance standards required in the recently passed Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act.

In December 2007, TFAH released the fifth annual “Ready or Not? Protecting the Public's Health from Disease, Disasters, and Bioterrorism” report, which found that while important progress has been made, critical areas of the nation's emergency health preparedness effort still require attention. The report warned that funding for the public health emergency preparedness cooperative agreements has been significantly cut over the past 5 years, reducing the ability of states to adequately protect their communities. It would be tragic if future assessments of state preparedness showed declines because we have withdrawn funding just as we are seeing a return on the investment toward preparedness.”

TFAH's “Ready or Not?” report contains state-by-state health preparedness scores based on 10 key indicators to assess health emergency preparedness capabilities. All 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (D.C.) were evaluated. Thirty-seven states and D.C. scored eight or higher on the scale of 10 indicators. Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Nebraska, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Virginia scored the highest with 10 out of 10. Iowa, Mississippi, Nevada, Wisconsin, and Wyoming scored the lowest with six out of 10.

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.

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