



TRUST FOR AMERICA'S HEALTH APPLAUDS INTRODUCTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2005

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Washington, DC, March 3, 2005 – The following is a statement from Shelley A. Hearne, DrPH, Executive Director of Trust for America's Health (TFAH):

“Trust for America's Health (TFAH) applauds U.S. Senators Chuck Hagel (R-NE), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Patty Murray (D-WA), and Maria Cantwell (D-WA) for introducing the Public Health Preparedness Workforce Development Act of 2005 today.

Public health is on the verge of a massive brain drain in its workforce. The impending mass retirement of baby boomer public health officials is a crisis in the making. In nearly half of the states, 25 percent or more of the state's public health workforce will be eligible to retire within the next five years, which will likely lead to severe staffing shortages. Eight states face critical retiree levels of 40 percent or higher.

Replacing this experienced workforce with a new generation of well-trained public health professionals needs to be a top priority for the country in order to protect U.S. citizens from health threats ranging from bioterrorism to the obesity epidemic.

The Senators introducing this bill should be commended for their leadership and foresight. Passage of this bill is essential for preventing epidemics and protecting the future health of all Americans.”

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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