



DESPITE PROGRESS OF NATIONAL PANDEMIC PLAN, FEDS STILL TOO NARROW ON PREPAREDNESS, TRUST FOR AMERICA'S HEALTH SAYS

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Washington, DC, May 3, 2006 – The following is a statement by Jeffrey Levi, PhD, Executive Director of Trust for America's Health (TFAH):

“The federal government-wide pandemic preparedness plan released today represents serious progress for our national readiness. It recognizes that a pandemic would impact every sector of society, and a comprehensive response involves engaging every federal agency and constituency. The depth and breadth of the plan, including over 300 activities that are tied to specific accountability measures and timelines, should be commended.

However, the plan does not adequately address the financial blow the country will take if and when an outbreak happens. The resources it will take to implement a comprehensive response effort during a pandemic will be enormous. For example, once it is available, will the federal government purchase the 600 million of doses needed to protect Americans against the pandemic strain? If so, at what cost? If not, who will be responsible for the vaccine purchase? We must think through these problems now, when we have time. We can't leave such important decisions to be decided in the heat of a crisis.

Also, we need to take concrete steps to assure the sustainability of our nation's health care services in a pandemic. A pandemic won't discriminate between people who are insured or uninsured. We need policies that will encourage those who are uninsured to seek care to help contain the spread of the disease, and ensure that health care providers won't be bankrupted by providing this care. There will be life after a pandemic, and we need to take measures so our health care system will still be standing.”

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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 and www.pandemicfluandyou.org