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Trust for America's Health on New HHS Influenza Pandemic Draft Guidance

TFAH Calls on the Federal Government to Ensure Equitable Protections for All Americans and Their Families

WASHINGTON, D.C. –Trust for America's Health (TFAH) issued the following statement on the release of The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [*Draft Guidances to Assist in Preparation for an Influenza Pandemic*](#) today, emphasizing that the federal government must do all it can to ensure it protects every American from a potential pandemic flu outbreak, especially those who are employed by smaller businesses that may not have the ability or resources to fully prepare.

“Asking employers and families to take tangible steps to prepare in advance for a pandemic influenza outbreak is step in the right direction. However, the federal government must assure that all Americans have access to the protections HHS recommends,” said **Jeff Levi, Director of the Trust for America's Health**. “An employee of a small to mid-size company should not be penalized because the enterprise can not afford the costs of acquiring, storing and dispensing antiviral medications during a flu pandemic.

“Nor is it reasonable for every American family to stockpile the recommended 20 respirator masks per household or the up to 100 facemasks per family at a cost of \$35.00 - \$70.00. Even for the families that can afford to stockpile masks, children would likely be left unprotected. There is still no Federal Drug Administration-approved respirator mask for kids, despite the warning by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that children can be more susceptible than adults to infection, and compared to adults, children usually shed more influenza virus for a longer period of time.

“In the event of a pandemic outbreak, leaving the massive costs and logistical responsibilities to businesses and individuals, without the assurance of equal access to key prevention strategies, like antivirals and respirator masks, is not an option. The government must assure all Americans are protected, regardless of where they live or work.”

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.
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