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## NATION NEEDS A GENERAL NOT A CORPORAL FOR SURGEON GENERAL

### *Health Group Urges Congress to Strengthen Role of Office of Surgeon General*

**Washington, DC** – As a Senate Committee hears testimony today on the nomination of Dr. Carmona to become this country's 17<sup>th</sup> Surgeon General, Trust for America's Health (TFAH) called on Congress to make the Office of the Surgeon General a true leader in protecting the nation's health by expanding its leadership role and giving it the tools needed to prevent today's top health threats.

"The Surgeon General's Office needs to be strengthened," said Lowell Weicker, former U.S. Senator and Governor of Connecticut, and current President of TFAH. "Americans face new health threats from potential chemical or biological terrorist attacks, and we have an ongoing epidemic of chronic diseases in this country on top of the continued risk of infectious diseases. We need a Surgeon General to be able to act as a General not a Corporal."

More than 50 different federal offices have some responsibility for ensuring the health of the public. Decades of restructuring under Democratic and Republican Administrations has weakened the Office of the Surgeon General.

"Historically, the Surgeon General has played a pivotal role in improving and protecting the health of our nation, but over the years the authority of the office has been diminished. Congress needs to reconsider the original intent and need for this office, and restore its leadership role so that the Office of the Surgeon General is more than just the bully pulpit it is today," added Weicker.

TFAH has been a leading advocate for quick action to fill the Office of the Surgeon General with a qualified leader who has public health and medical expertise.

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*The Trust for America's Health is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to protect the health and safety of all communities, especially those most at risk of environmental and other public health threats. For more information on this and other issues, visit [www.healthyamericans.org](http://www.healthyamericans.org).*