



TFAH Lauds Administration for Pandemic Flu Preparedness Progress; Warns State and Local Preparedness Lagging

Media contacts: Laura Segal (202) 223-9870 x 278 or lsegal@tfah.org

WASHINGTON, July 17, 2007 – The following is a statement from Jeff Levi, PhD, Executive Director of Trust for America's Health (TFAH):

“This report demonstrates that the federal government has made major strides in preparedness for a pandemic, but as the Administration also recognizes, there is still a long way to go before all levels of government and all sectors of society are fully prepared.

The transparency with which the Administration has set its pandemic flu preparedness goals and then held itself accountable for achieving them is a model for how public health policy should be made. The American people rightly expect this level of openness in their government, and the cabinet agencies reporting today should be commended for achieving it.

As important as this progress is, major work remains to be done. There are critical elements of preparedness that the strategy does not fully address, including:

- Assuring all states and localities develop the capacity to care for the surge of patients associated with a pandemic;
- Assisting all sectors of society to adapt to the guidelines to communities from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) to help lessen the harmful impact a pandemic could have, including those related to the use of respirator masks by the general public; and,
- Assuring a steady stream of funding for state and local pandemic preparedness efforts, in addition to funds requested for vaccine development and medical stockpiles.

As Secretary Leavitt has said repeatedly, the true test of preparedness will be the readiness of state and local governments to respond. We hope the federal government's assessment of state pandemic preparedness plans also will be made publicly available soon so that citizens can assess the readiness of their individual states to deal with a pandemic flu outbreak. We feel confident that continued transparency will yield more preparedness and assurance in communities across America.

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.