



SENATE PASSAGE OF AVIAN FLU AMENDMENT IS A “MONUMENTAL” STEP FORWARD FOR U.S. PANDEMIC PREPARATIONS, SAYS TRUST FOR AMERICA’S HEALTH

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Washington, DC, October 27, 2005 – The following is a statement from Richard Hamburg, Director of Government Relations of Trust for America’s Health (TFAH):

“The U.S. Senate took a monumental step today by passing an \$8 billion amendment to improve the country’s readiness for a potential pandemic flu outbreak. The amendment sponsors, Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Harry Reid (D-NV), Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Barack Obama (D-IL), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Tim Johnson (D-SD), Hillary Clinton (D-NY), Evan Bayh (D-IN), Charles Schumer (D-NY), and Jack Reed (D-RI), should be commended for their leadership in addressing the U.S. need to bolster vaccine capacity, purchase additional antiviral medications, enhance global disease surveillance, improve state and local medical response capabilities, and surge capacity readiness. This amendment to the Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations bill clearly outlines the serious vulnerabilities in America’s current level of preparedness, and the measures and investments that must be taken to respond to the growing threat posed by avian flu. However, the amendment requires the funds be spent at the discretion of the president in consultation with Congressional leaders and still needs to be considered as part of the upcoming Congressional conference process. We are still anxiously awaiting the release of the Bush Administration’s spending priorities and planning documents. This makes the need to immediately release the plan even more critical. The clock is ticking as the threat is growing.”

TFAH pandemic flu-related materials are available at <http://healthyamericans.org/reports/flu/>

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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