

Working Group on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness

May 23, 2006

Dear Conferee:

On May 3rd, the Bush Administration unveiled a pandemic flu implementation plan that outlines a government-wide, coordinated response to a pandemic influenza outbreak. It provides details, beyond health care, of changes Americans can expect in how they travel, work and conduct day-to-day activities during a severe pandemic.

This plan foretells the enormous impact that a pandemic would cause in *every* sector of society, yet it fails to adequately address the financial burden that state and local public health and medical infrastructure will experience if an outbreak occurs. The financial resources it will take to implement an all-inclusive response effort during a pandemic will be enormous, and we must anticipate those costs now, not in the midst of a crisis.

On behalf of the Working Group on Pandemic Preparedness, we urge you to actively support efforts to ensure that our families, our community and the United States are adequately prepared for this potential health emergency. That is why we are asking you to support the \$2.3 billion for pandemic flu preparedness included in the Senate-passed version of the Fiscal Year 2006 emergency supplemental appropriations measure (H.R. 4939). These funds include \$300 million in support for upgrading state and local public health department capacity, which is critically important, given that local communities will be tasked with containing the spread of the virus and treating those who become ill.

The amendment also provides \$200 million to carry out global and domestic human and animal disease surveillance, increase laboratory capacity and research, enhance laboratory diagnostics, undertake risk communication activities, and augment rapid response and quarantine protocols.

Congress must act *now* to make sure our nation has every tool available to minimize suffering and loss should a pandemic outbreak occur. We urge you to retain the \$2.3 billion for pandemic readiness provided in the Senate legislation. To do otherwise would shortchange the American people.

Sincerely,

American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
American College of Physicians
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
American Lung Association

American Medical Women's Association
American Osteopathic Association
American Public Health Association
American Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Campaign for Public Health
Center for Biosecurity, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
Federation of American Scientists
Foundation for Allergy & Immunology Research
Infectious Diseases Society of America
National Association of County and City Health Officials
RetireSafe
Service Employees International Union
Trust for America's Health
Wildlife Conservation Society

Please direct all inquiries or comments to Jeff Levi (jlevi@tfah.org), Kim Elliott (kelliott@tfah.org) or Rich Hamburg (rhamburg@tfah.org). All can be reached by phone at 202-223-9870. Trust for America's Health is committed to sharing information with all members of the Working Group on Pandemic Flu Preparedness or directing specific inquiries to participating organizations.