

## **Working Group on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness**

April 11, 2007

Dear Senator/Representative:

As you move towards conference on the Fiscal Year 2007 emergency supplemental appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you include the House-passed level of funding for pandemic flu preparedness in the final version of the measure. This funding is critical to the readiness of the United States to respond to an influenza pandemic.

If a moderately severe strain of a pandemic flu virus hit the U.S., over half a million Americans could die, and over 2.3 million could be hospitalized. A recent report released by Trust for America's Health finds that a severe pandemic flu outbreak, similar to the one that occurred in 1918, could result in the second worst recession in the U.S. since World War II, with a potential drop in U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of over 5.5 percent. It is incumbent upon us to maximize preparedness and provide resources now, not in the midst of a pandemic flu outbreak.

We deeply appreciate your leadership in funding these efforts in the past Congress. To date, over \$6 billion of the \$7.1 billion requested by the President in November, 2005 has been appropriated. Now the President has requested the completion of this funding commitment in his FY 2008 budget proposal. We are encouraged that the House and Senate versions of the emergency supplemental include funding for this final installment in order to accelerate the development and purchase of vaccines, anti-viral medications, and necessary medical supplies and to enhance worldwide and domestic human and animal surveillance tools.

The House version of the Supplemental includes \$969,650,000 for influenza pandemic preparedness and response, as well as \$50 million for a vaccine compensation program. The Senate version allocates a total of \$870,000,000 for pandemic flu activities within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including \$50 million for a vaccine compensation program. Both bills also allocate \$13.2 million for the Department of the Interior for avian flu research and monitoring, as well as \$161 million for State-Foreign Operations programs to maintain and expand efforts to detect, prevent and control the spread of avian influenza.

Since it has not been included in either version of the emergency supplemental legislation, we ask that you include \$350 million in annual recurring funding for state and local pandemic preparedness activities in the FY 2008 appropriations process. States and localities would use this funding to exercise pandemic response plans, make revisions and updates to plans and build medical surge capacity. In addition, we urge you to

include the remaining \$322 million in the President's FY 2008 budget proposal for ongoing pandemic preparedness activities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, Food and Drug Administration and Office of the Secretary.

Congress must act now to make sure our nation has every tool available to minimize suffering and loss should a pandemic flu outbreak occur. On behalf of the Working Group on Pandemic Preparedness, we urge you to include the House-passed total of \$1.02 billion for pandemic preparedness activities within HHS, as well as \$13.2 million for the Department of the Interior and \$161 million for the Department of State's pandemic activities, in the final version of the emergency supplemental. We appreciate your efforts on this important priority and look forward to working with you to achieve these goals.

Sincerely,

American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine  
American Osteopathic Association  
American Red Cross  
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology  
Association of Public Health Laboratories  
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials  
Campaign for Public Health  
CARE USA  
Center for Biosecurity, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center  
Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy  
Federation of American Scientists  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
National Association of Community Health Centers  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Association of State EMS Officials  
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.