

October 17, 2007

**Statement of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton on Release of  
Pandemic Influenza: Warning, Children at Risk**

<http://clinton.senate.gov/news/statements/details.cfm?id=285596&&>

I am pleased to see that Trust for America's Health and the American Academy of Pediatrics have released this report highlighting the needs of pediatric populations during a pandemic influenza epidemic. As our public health system works to prepare for both a potential pandemic and seasonal influenza, we must ensure that our efforts to protect our health extend to children as well.

Our government recognizes the importance of vaccinating children against seasonal flu, but more must be done. This report highlights the ways in which our experiences with seasonal flu vaccination can impact our efforts to vaccinate children during a pandemic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends vaccination for all children from six months to four years of age, children who have chronic diseases like asthma, and school-aged children who wish to reduce the risk of becoming ill with influenza. However, influenza vaccination rates among these populations is low, with less than one out of five children receiving the recommended vaccinations. Clearly, we must do more to improve awareness of the importance of flu vaccination among pediatric populations during our annual flu season.

This report also highlights some of the challenges in pandemic preparation. Much of our preparation has been focused on stockpiling antiviral medications and facemasks. In the past few years, antiviral medications have been approved for use in some, but not all, pediatric subgroups. However, we have not made such

advances with masks and respirators, many of which are not designed to fit the smaller faces of children. We must ensure that pediatric formulations of medications and devices are widely available during a pandemic.

I will soon be reintroducing legislation with Senator Roberts – the Influenza Vaccine Security Act – that will address some of the issues in the report, in addition to helping our overall national response to seasonal influenza. This bill will improve the ability of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to provide outreach to priority populations, such as young children, and improve vaccination rates among those most at risk of complications from influenza. It will also require the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that pediatric products are adequately represented in the Strategic National Stockpile, and encourage the Secretary to work with the private sector to develop treatments and devices to help protect children during a flu pandemic. With these provisions, we will be taking steps to prevent transmission of both seasonal and pandemic influenza among the tens of millions of children in our country.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress to raise awareness of the public health needs in both seasonal and pandemic influenza for children, families, and all Americans.

###