

Working Group on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness

November 3, 2006

Dear Senator/Representative:

We write to you today as members of the Working Group on Pandemic Flu Preparedness which serves as a broad-based coalition of organizations that believe that pandemic influenza poses a major threat to the nation's public health, security, and economy. We also believe that the U.S. government's preparedness efforts should be commensurate with the threat.

Scientific experts believe that another potential deadly pandemic is inevitable. The only questions are when it will occur, how severe it will be, and whether the world is ready for it

In June, Congress enacted the *Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery, 2006*, Public Law No. 109-234. The Act provided an additional \$2.3 billion in resources needed to protect Americans from a potential influenza pandemic. To date, more than \$6 billion of the initial \$7.1 billion requested by President Bush in November 2005 has been appropriated for use by several federal agencies, including the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and its Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Most of the resources appropriated to DHHS have been for one-time or initial costs, or to fulfill contractual obligations for essential items, including initiating a vaccine tracking system, increasing U.S. vaccine manufacturing capacity, and purchasing antiviral medications and medical supplies. However, there is a need for an ongoing annual investment, particularly at the CDC, to ensure that preparedness efforts are truly effective. These activities require funding beyond the life cycle of the supplemental appropriation vehicles.

The undersigned members of the Working Group on Pandemic Flu Preparedness urge your support for the additional \$119 million included in the Senate Appropriations Committee-approved Fiscal Year 2007 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations legislation for recurring annual pandemic influenza preparedness efforts at the CDC.

For Fiscal Year 2007, such funds would be utilized for a number of programs, including the acquisition of, and support for, a diagnostic reagent stockpile, development of a library of pandemic reference strains, increased surveillance for human and avian flu cases, diagnosis and epidemic investigations, and further development of rapid outbreak response in high risk countries. Funds would also be utilized for FTEs to provide technical support and to help plan the CDC's ongoing preparedness response.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Allergy & Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics
Alnylam Pharmaceuticals
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Lung Association
American Medical Association
American Osteopathic Association
American Public Health Association
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
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
Federation of American Scientists
Foundation for Allergy and Immunology Research
Infectious Diseases Society of America
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Kidney Foundation
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.