

## Working Group on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness

September 19, 2008

Representative David Obey  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
H-218 U.S. Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Jerry Lewis  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Robert Byrd  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-131 U.S. Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-146A U.S. Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Obey & Byrd and Ranking Members Lewis & Cochran:

On behalf of the Working Group on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness, a broad-based coalition of organizations that believe that pandemic influenza poses a major threat to the nation's public health, security, and economy, and that the U.S. government's preparedness efforts should be commensurate with the threat, we write to express support for two important funding increases included in the August 1, 2008 amendment to the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 budget request.

The amendment calls for a \$905 million increase to the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund. This increase would support programs crucial to the nation's public health emergency preparedness, including pandemic influenza preparedness and the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA). The additional funding should be included in any stimulus, supplemental or Continuing Resolution considered by Congress before it adjourns for the year.

The threat of pandemic influenza continues unabated. Last month, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Julie Gerberding warned: "Complacency is enemy number one when it comes to preparing for another influenza pandemic." The Working Group commends Congress for its significant investment to date for pandemic preparedness activities, but additional funding is needed to complete the preparedness activities outlined in the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza in November 2005.

The proposed budget amendment calls for an additional \$363 million for one-time funding for vaccine and antiviral purchases, and for the development of rapid diagnostics, bringing the total to \$870 million. In FY 2008, the President requested these funds, which while included in large part in the vetoed FY 2008 Labor/HHS funding measures, were not incorporated into the final FY 2008 omnibus appropriations bill. We urge Congress to provide this funding to help complete the current commitment to treatment options. We also

look forward to working with Congress to continue the federal commitment to all critical elements of pandemic influenza preparedness, including state and local capacities to manage a pandemic.

The amendment also includes funding increases for BARDA, within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, to support advanced development and procurement of medical countermeasures for chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear agents, as well as for pandemic influenza and other emerging infectious diseases. These threats to the nation are real. BARDA holds great potential to encourage and facilitate research and development of new biomedical countermeasures, diagnostics, and related technologies; however, the intentions of Congress and the Administration in creating BARDA are far from being realized. The small amount of funding provided to BARDA to date only has allowed the Department of Health and Human Services to establish an infrastructure to support a yet-to-be-seen robust advanced R&D portfolio for many innovative biomedical products.

Again, we request your support in ensuring that this funding is included in any stimulus supplemental or Continuing Resolution considered by the Congress before it adjourns for the year. We do not support the Administration's proposed offset for this initiative (the HHS Social Services Block Grant) and believe that this meritorious proposal should be funded without an offset.

Sincerely,

American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine  
American Lung Association  
American Osteopathic Association  
Association of Public Health Laboratories  
Association of State & Territorial Health Officials  
Campaign for Public Health  
Center for Biosecurity, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center  
Center for Infectious Disease Research & Policy  
GlaxoSmithKline  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
National Association of Community Health Centers  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
Novartis  
Planet Biotechnology  
Roche  
Service Employees International Union  
Trius Therapeutics  
Trust for America's Health  
VaxInnate Corporation

cc: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi  
House Minority Leader John Boehner  
Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid  
Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell  
Senate Labor-HHS Chairman Tom Harkin  
Senate Labor-HHS Ranking Member Arlen Specter  
House Labor-HHS Ranking Member James Walsh

Please direct all inquires or comments to Jeff Levi ([jlevi@tfah.org](mailto:jlevi@tfah.org)), Kim Elliott ([kelliott@tfah.org](mailto:kelliott@tfah.org)), or Rich Hamburg ([rhamburg@tfah.org](mailto: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 Preparedness or directing specific inquiries to participating organizations.

