

December 11, 2007

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
476 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Pat Roberts
109 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Clinton and Roberts:

I am writing today on behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to endorse the Influenza Vaccine Security Act of 2007.

This bill would begin to address uncertainty in influenza vaccine supply. NACCHO believes that federal vaccine policy must explicitly recognize, support, and strengthen the unique roles of governmental public health agencies in monitoring vaccine availability at the local level, assuring that immunizations are received by the most vulnerable and high-risk populations, and intervening to correct maldistribution, particularly during shortages and supply disruptions. Tracking influenza vaccine supplies would assist local health departments to learn which end-users may have excess vaccine that they are willing to donate or sell so that it can be reallocated voluntarily to nursing homes, health departments, visiting nurses, or any other entity that serves a high-risk population. During the 2004-2005 flu season, NACCHO and local health departments learned many lessons about what information is needed when vaccine shortages occur. We appreciate the inclusion of a tracking system in your bill that has potential to collect data at the local level and provide estimates of supply on a county by county basis. The funding authorized in your bill will provide a good start on a national system of tracking influenza vaccine supply, which will help prevent illness and death when supply shortages or disruptions occur.

We also appreciate the inclusion in your bill of demonstration grants to enhance the infrastructure of public health departments and health care providers in order to improve their ability to report and track influenza vaccine supply. The ability of local health departments to serve their communities will also be strengthened by the influenza vaccine education and outreach grants included in the Influenza Vaccine Security Act of 2007.

The shortages and maldistribution of influenza vaccine is a critical issue that our nation will undoubtedly face again in the future. This legislation would provide important tools to help ensure that individuals that need influenza vaccine are protected in the future. Thank you for your past support of local public health. The nation's local health departments look forward to continuing to work with you to safeguard the public's health.

Sincerely,



Patrick M. Libbey
Executive Director

