



TFAH RELEASES CHECKLIST OF 10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REAUTHORIZATION OF BIOTERRORISM LEGISLATION; HOLDS HILL BRIEFING ON HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ISSUES

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Washington, DC, March 21, 2006 – Trust for America’s Health (TFAH) issued a “checklist” today of key components for inclusion in the reauthorization of the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act. “The Bioterrorism Act,” originally passed in 2002, provided resources to enhance public health to better prevent, prepare for, and respond to bioterrorism and other major health emergencies.

“Congress demonstrated strong, decisive leadership passing the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act after the tragedies of September 11th and the subsequent anthrax attacks. It has resulted in major improvements to our nation’s under-resourced public health capabilities, though much more still needs to be done” said Richard Hamburg, Director of Government Relations at TFAH. “As Congress considers the reauthorization of the legislation, there is a tremendous opportunity to accelerate progress to fill the remaining gaps and vulnerabilities in our nation’s preparedness for health threats.”

The checklist was released at a briefing on Capitol Hill about health emergency preparedness, sponsored by TFAH. Speakers included Dr. Shelley Hearne, Executive Director of TFAH; Dr. Jamie Rivera, Delaware Director of Public Health, Dr. Irwin Redlener, Associate Dean, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, and Director, The National Center for Disaster Preparedness, and Kathy L. Warye, Executive Director of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC).

TFAH’s recommendations for the Bioterrorism Act’s reauthorization center on ways of improving accountability, strengthening leadership, bolstering surge capacity and workforce capabilities, and modernizing technology and equipment. TFAH’s 10-item checklist for the upcoming reauthorization debate includes recommendations to:

- 1. Establish Concrete Performance Measures**
- 2. Require Tabletop Exercises**
- 3. Limit Carry-Over Funding**
- 4. Designate a Single Health Official To Be In Charge**
- 5. Require M.O.U. Agreements with States**
- 6. Incorporate Federal Preparedness Guidance More Effectively Across Programs**
- 7. Expand and Fortify the Volunteer Medical Workforce**
- 8. Take Congressional Action to Bolster the Public Health Workforce**
- 9. Improve Laboratory Testing Capabilities**
- 10. Modernize Surveillance Systems for Operability between States/Agencies**

Detailed descriptions of each recommendation can be found at www.healthyamericans.org

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Trust for America’s Health is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to saving lives by protecting the health of every community and working to make disease prevention a national priority.
www.healthyamericans.org