



## EXPERTS WARN NATION'S PANDEMIC FLU PREPAREDNESS NOT KEEPING PACE WITH ADVANCEMENTS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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**Washington, D. C., October 4, 2006** – Trust for America's Health (TFAH) and the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) today raised concerns that pandemic flu preparedness efforts are falling behind advances in science and technology. The scientific and health groups issued a set of policy recommendations that outline actions that should be taken now to better prepare the nation for a pandemic flu outbreak.

“The United States must expand and accelerate research efforts and ensure we rapidly translate scientific breakthroughs into real-world practice to prepare for a possible pandemic,” said Kathleen Maletic Neuzil, MD, Chair of IDSA's Pandemic Influenza Task Force, and Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Washington School of Medicine, who is a co-author of the report. “This is particularly important in the area of flu vaccine production and delivery, which will always be the best defense against pandemic flu.”

TFAH and IDSA recommend that:

- The U.S. develop a **Pandemic Vaccine Research and Development Master Plan** to systemize and greatly enhance the current U.S. and international vaccine research and development strategies, bringing together the knowledge of government and private industry scientists. The program would provide a comprehensive approach to vaccine development, production, and delivery. A substantial increase in federal funding would be required to match the scale needed for this effort.
- The U.S. adopt policies to **increase seasonal influenza vaccination rates** to reduce rates of illness and death from yearly influenza and stabilize the nation's vaccine manufacturing and distribution capabilities. This includes encouraging state and local health departments to use federal preparedness funds to purchase annual flu vaccine in order to test mass vaccination capabilities. This would be an important way to exercise our capacity to conduct mass vaccinations in a public health emergency.
- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) continue to **streamline the licensure process for pandemic flu vaccine** to make the vaccine available for public use as quickly as possible; and to adopt appropriate criteria that will **allow foreign clinical trial data** to speed the use of advances made in other countries into the U.S.
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) implement a **nationwide, real-time system to track the use and effectiveness of vaccine**, which is needed to make the most efficient use possible of limited amounts of vaccine.

- The U.S. **expand and strengthen working relationships with other countries** to improve the ability to identify and respond to an outbreak as soon as possible.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) **increase the amount of antiviral medication in the Strategic National Stockpile to be able to treat at minimum 25 percent of the U.S. population.** The current model requiring states to cover 75 percent of purchasing costs for well over one third of the stockpile will likely lead to inequities leaving some communities less protected than others due to differing financial resources in states.
- The **Congress rapidly pass and the Administration implement the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act** to improve the country’s public health response capabilities and expand programs critical to supporting innovation in the private sector.

“The possibility of a pandemic requires that we step up our research and development efforts in order to have the state-of-the-art science and technology we need to address the threat,” said Jeffrey Levi, PhD, Executive Director of TFAH. “Congress made a serious investment of more than \$5 billion into pandemic preparedness last year; this helps the country take the first steps toward fixing vaccine capacity and preparedness after years of neglect. However, this problem can’t be resolved with a one-time infusion of funds. It requires an ongoing and sustained effort and investment.

The recommendations are included in a new report, “**Pandemic Influenza: The State of the Science,**” which draws upon interviews conducted with 14 leading scientific experts on influenza, pandemics, and infectious disease to examine what is known scientifically about influenza viruses as well as developments in vaccines, medications, and diagnostics that could be used in the event of a possible pandemic.

Experts consulted for the report include: **Lawrence Deyton**, MSPH, MD, with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; **Anthony S. Fauci**, MD, with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases; **David Fedson**, MD, formerly with the University of Virginia and Aventis Pasteur; **Gregory K. Folkers**, MS, MPH, with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases; **Scott Harper**, MD, with the New York City Department of Health; **Hillery A. Harvey**, PhD, with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases; **Frederick G. Hayden**, MD, with the University of Virginia Health Sciences Center and the World Health Organization; **Kathleen Maletic Neuzil**, MD, with PATH and the University of Washington School of Medicine and Chair of IDSA’s Pandemic Influenza Task Force; **Michael T. Osterholm**, PhD, MPH, with the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota; **Andrew T. Pavia**, MD, with the University of Utah School of Medicine and Chair of the National and Global Public Health Committee of the IDSA; **Gregory A. Poland**, MD, with the Mayo Vaccine Research Group; **Robert T. Schooley**, MD, with the University of California at San Diego; **John Treanor**, MD, with the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry and Vaccine and Treatment Evaluation Unit; and **Tim Uyeki**, MD, MPH, MPP, with the National Center for Infectious Diseases of the CDC. The opinions presented in the paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the interviewees.

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[www.healthyamericans.org](http://www.healthyamericans.org). and [www.pandemicfluandyou.org](http://www.pandemicfluandyou.org).

*The Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) is an organization of physicians, scientists, and other health care professionals dedicated to promoting health through excellence in infectious diseases research, education, prevention, and patient care. The Society, which has 8,000 members, is based in Alexandria, VA. Nested within IDSA is the HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA), the professional home for more than 3,000 physicians, scientists, and other health care professionals dedicated to the field of HIV/AIDS. For more information, visit [www.idsociety.org](http://www.idsociety.org).*

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