



Cuts Proposed in the President's Budget to Disease Prevention and Bioterrorism Preparedness Programs Jeopardize the Health of Americans, TFAH Warns

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Washington, D. C. February 5, 2007 – Trust for America's Health (TFAH) today expressed concern over cuts proposed in the Administration's fiscal year (FY) 2008 budget to key disease prevention and public health preparedness programs.

The FY 2008 budget includes a cut of \$99 million to zero out the Prevention Health and Health Services Block Grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which states use to support disease prevention efforts. Most other chronic disease programs remained essentially flat funded for a third year in a row.

Programs dedicated to bioterrorism and public health preparedness capabilities, specifically programs intended to support upgrading state and local capabilities and hospital readiness, experienced a \$185 million cut. This represents a more than 25 percent cut from the public health preparedness funding level in FY 2005.

"The reduction of the bioterrorism and public health preparedness programs is particularly troubling," said Richard Hamburg, Director of Government Relations at TFAH. "We are cutting core boots-on-the-ground support for emergency disaster response, leaving the country at unnecessary levels of risk."

TFAH commends the Administration for including an additional \$1.1 billion for pandemic flu preparedness. These new funds will help support the ability of the country to rapidly detect and respond to a potential outbreak, improve risk communications, and accelerate vaccine development.

"The increased funding for pandemic flu preparedness demonstrates the Administration's real commitment to addressing this serious health threat, and they should be commended for this level of support," Hamburg continued.

Last week, TFAH released a new poll that found that 64 percent of Americans are worried about a biological attack, 70 percent are worried about a chemical terrorism attack, and 61 percent are worried about the possibility of a pandemic flu outbreak. Additionally, Americans continued to rank chronic diseases among their top concerns, with 84 percent of Americans listing cancer as a serious concern, and 80 percent ranking heart disease as a key concern.

The poll finds nearly two-thirds of Americans believe the federal government should increase funding for disease research and preventive measures, with four-in-ten saying the government should spend "much more" than current spending levels.

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 and www.pandemicfluandyou.org

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