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U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20515-6115

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November 23, 2005

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The Honorable Joe Barton
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Pursuant to rule 4(c)(2) of the Rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, I request that you forward the attached follow-up questions for the record from me to the Honorable Michael O. Leavitt, Secretary of Health and Human Services, who appeared before the Committee hearing entitled "Assessing the National Pandemic Flu Preparedness Plan" held on November 8, 2005. The attached questions, along with the witness responses, should be included in the printed hearing record.

I would further ask that when the responses are received, a copy be forwarded to Sharon Davis (sharon.davis@mail.house.gov) of the Committee's Democratic staff. If any further information is required, please have your staff contact Sharon at ext. 5-3641 or by e-mail.

With every good wish.

Sincerely,



JOHN D. DINGELL
RANKING MEMBER

Attachments

Questions from the Honorable John D. Dingell

The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt, Secretary

Department of Health and Human Services

November 8, 2005

Full Committee Hearing entitled: "Assessing the National Pandemic Flu Preparedness Plan"

1. In terms of being prepared for the next flu pandemic, do you believe that there is a gap between where States are today versus where they need to be in order to be fully able to do all that is expected of them under your plan?
2. Do you believe that State and local governments have the resources that they will need in order to do all the things expected of them in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Pandemic Influenza Plan? Please explain your answer in detail.
3. Has the Administration estimated what it will cost State and local governments to do all that is expected of them in the Administration's plan? Please provide such an estimate and transmit it to me within the next 60 days. Please prepare those estimates on a State-by-State basis and include the facts and assumptions upon which the estimates are based.
4. The Administration is requesting \$6.7 billion to implement its pandemic flu plan. How long will this money last? Do you anticipate making subsequent funding requests for pandemic flu preparation? If so, please tell us when, how much, and for what purpose you anticipate making such requests. Does the Administration plan to submit revenue or spending proposals that offset any of its pandemic flu funding requests? If so, please provide details.
5. Do you agree that maximizing flu pandemic preparedness will minimize the inevitable loss to our economy when the next flu pandemic hits? Have you estimated the cost to our economy of an influenza pandemic at present levels of preparedness versus levels of preparedness that would be achieved if all aspects of the Administration's plan were fully implemented? If not, please conduct economic modeling studies that compare the effects on the economy of a pandemic under current levels of preparedness versus what those effects would be if the entire Nation achieved the levels of preparedness called for in the Administration's pandemic flu plan. Please provide me with the results of these studies as soon as possible and no later than 60 days after receipt of this request.
6. The Administration's pandemic flu plan identifies a cohort of persons who should be vaccinated in advance of the onset of a pandemic. These are first responders and others who need to be well when the flu pandemic arrives. How many people do you estimate are in this group? Is the amount of vaccine you plan to stockpile sufficient for this many people?

7. Do you believe the needed number of first responders and persons who should be vaccinated in advance will agree to be vaccinated with an experimental vaccine in advance of a pandemic “triggering event” if they or their survivors will not be compensated for serious injury or death caused by the vaccine? Please explain your answer in detail.