



August 15, 2005

The Honorable Henry Waxman  
United States House of Representatives  
2204 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Waxman:

On behalf of Trust for America's Health (TFAH), 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, I would like to thank you for your leadership in protecting our nation's health. By introducing H.R. 3502, the *Vaccine Access and Supply Act of 2005*, you address one of the most critical issues confronting the public's health in the United States – the challenges in ensuring an adequate and timely vaccine supply for all Americans, especially for the most vulnerable – children and the elderly.

Vaccines protect against devastating diseases and save hundreds of thousands of lives each year. The U.S. has a responsibility to protect its citizens from dangerous strains of influenza and other diseases. Yet, the number of pharmaceutical companies making vaccines has decreased dramatically over the past 30 years, and the nation has been plagued by several recent vaccine shortages.

The situation is serious. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 46,000 to 48,000 adults die annually from vaccine-preventable deaths. At the same time, influenza and pneumococcal vaccine rates for adults remain low.

The introduction of the *Vaccine Access and Supply Act of 2005* is an important first step toward better vaccine preparedness and would strengthen and make available expanded access to lifesaving vaccines for children and adults most in need. Among key provisions identified by TFAH:

- Establishment of a vaccine for adults program which would significantly expand the number of individuals covered;
- Creation of incentives for production of so-called "periodic-change" vaccines, including annual influenza vaccines, through guaranteed purchases from manufacturers;
- Increased support for state immunization outreach, tracking, and delivery efforts; and

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- Establishment of mechanisms to more adequately warn public officials of a manufacturer's intention to discontinue or reduce production of vaccine.

Again, I want to commend your leadership and thank you for introducing this very important public health bill. TFAH looks forward to continuing to work with you on this and other important public health initiatives in the future. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Richard Hamburg at (202) 223-9876 or Darrell Villaruz at (202) 223-9870 x274.

Sincerely,



Shelley A. Hearne, DrPH  
Executive Director