



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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***GOVERNOR NAPOLITANO TO LEAD PANDEMIC FLU CONFERENCE
WITH FEDERAL HHS SECRETARY LEAVITT***

PHOENIX – Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano has sent invitations to a wide range of community and business leaders across the state, asking them to attend Arizona's Pandemic Readiness and Emergency Planning conference – "Arizona Prepares" – on Friday, Jan. 6, 2006 at the Orpheum Theater in downtown Phoenix.

Governor Napolitano will lead the event with U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt, CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding and other top federal health and preparedness officials. Arizona is Secretary Leavitt's second stop on a national tour of states. Arizona is working with local governments and communities to prepare for the possibility of a flu pandemic.

"This is an important and historic event for Arizona," Governor Napolitano said. "We are at the forefront of preparedness efforts, and I am proud that we will taking a national role."

The National Governors' Association named Governor Napolitano, along with Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, as a co-lead on pandemic flu planning to help all states update their preparedness plans and to work with the federal government on coordinated response strategies.

The Jan. 6th meeting will be Arizona's first statewide gathering to address pandemic readiness planning, and will give a broad range of organizations an opportunity to participate in the process. Invitations to attend the event have been extended to local governments, first responders, business leaders, educators, health care providers, faith-based organizations, volunteer agencies, policy makers and others.

"This is an opportunity to talk to schools, churches, the business community, and others about emergency preparedness," Governor Napolitano said. "All of us will be involved in preparing our communities for a possible pandemic."

More information on pandemic flu readiness and the conference is available at the Arizona Department of Health Services' Web site, www.azdhs.gov.