



**PROPOSED CUT TO CDC IN PRESIDENT'S BUDGET PROPOSAL
SHORTCHANGES AMERICA'S HEALTH AND BIOTERROR PREPAREDNESS; OUT
OF STEP WITH AMERICANS' CONCERNS ACCORDING TO NEW POLL**

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WASHINGTON, February 7, 2005 -- President Bush's FY 2006 budget released today contains proposed cuts to health and bioterrorism programs that fail to match the concerns of the American people, based on findings from a new poll issued by Trust for America's Health (TFAH).

"The proposed budget contains cuts to programs that are essential to the health and safety of Americans," said Shelley A. Hearne, DrPH, Executive Director of TFAH. "Times are tough, but protecting the public's health should not be optional. It's worth investing in preventing and reducing disease and preparing for disasters now rather than scrambling and paying in dollars and lives when the next health emergency strikes."

Some items of specific concern to TFAH in the budget submitted by the President include:

- An overall cut of nearly 7 percent cut to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which is a cut of over \$530 million. This includes a cut of approximately 9 percent to core CDC programs and at least a \$260 million cut to state and local public health programs.
- A 6.5 percent cut, more than \$58 million, in the CDC's Chronic Disease and Health Promotion programs, which include preventing cancer, heart disease, obesity -- the diseases that are of most concern to Americans;
- Elimination of the Preventive Health and Health Service Block Grants that have routinely been awarded to states, a cut of more than \$130 million;
- A 12.6 percent cut to CDC's bioterrorism preparedness fund, representing nearly \$147 million, despite repeated reports that indicate that the country is still not adequately ready to respond to a biological or chemical terror attack;
- CDC building and facilities funds, which include money for upgrading or modernizing research and testing capabilities, were cut by 88 percent, nearly \$240 million;

Among the items of encouragement TFAH found:

- A 21 percent increase for pandemic influenza programs;
- A 4.2 percent increase in global health initiatives;
- A 51.2 percent increase for the Strategic National Stockpile for emergency vaccines and medications.

"The proposed cut to the CDC, the agency responsible for reducing disease and improving health, runs counter to Americans' desire to improve health in this country," said Hearne. "This cut is out of kilter with what the public wants and with the country's goal of protecting and improving the health of its citizens."

RESULTS OF NATIONWIDE POLL

TFAH also released a new nationwide poll today that found that Americans:

- Are more concerned with diseases that impact their daily lives than they are with potential disasters;
- Feel that the country is not well prepared to respond to terrorist emergencies; and
- Favor the federal government increasing the share of spending on “researching causes and preventing disease.”

For the second year in a row, Americans ranked cancer as their top health concern (37 percent). Following cancer, the other top concerns were heart disease (14 percent), obesity (13 percent), chemical terrorism (11 percent), and biological terrorism (7 percent). Combined, significantly more Americans were worried about chronic diseases (cancer, heart disease, obesity, and asthma), than various terrorist attacks (biological, chemical, and food contamination).

Seven out of 10 Americans (71 percent) also favor the federal government increasing the share of spending on “researching causes and preventing disease.” Currently, the federal government spends 92 percent of health dollars on diagnosis and treatment of disease, and only eight percent on researching causes and prevention.

Less than 20 percent of Americans believe that the U.S. public health system is “very prepared” for emergency response situations, and a quarter (25 percent) of Americans feel the U.S. is very unprepared for disasters. Overall, however, Americans feel that the country is less prepared to respond to a bioterrorism or chemical terrorism threat than a natural or accidental disaster, such as a tsunami or chemical spill.

Seventy percent of respondents feel the U.S. public health system is prepared to handle a nationwide flu outbreak; 64 percent of respondents felt the U.S. is prepared to respond to an accidental chemical spill, like the recent South Carolina train incident; and a slight majority of Americans (56 percent) believe the U.S. is prepared to handle a natural disaster similar to the recent Asian tsunami.

On the other hand, only slightly more than half of Americans feel the U.S. is prepared to respond to a bioterrorism or chemical event (52 percent). Additionally, almost half of Americans believe we are *unprepared* for a terrorist attack on the nation’s food supply (49 percent). By an average of eight to 10 percentage points, women were more likely than men to feel that the country was unprepared for a disaster or terrorism attack.

“This poll demonstrates that Americans are highly concerned about their health and are willing to invest more in prevention. It also shows that many Americans think we are far more prepared than we really are to respond to the range of hazards we face,” said Hearne.

More information about the public health programs in the President’s FY 2006 proposed budget, specific data and findings from the public opinion poll, and updated state-by-state health information are available on TFAH’s Web site at www.healthyamericans.org.

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.