



NON-PARTISAN ADVOCACY GROUP PRAISES SENATOR COLEMAN FOR LEADERSHIP IN LAUNCHING INVESTIGATION TO IMPROVE NATION'S PREPAREDNESS FOR POSSIBLE RE-EMERGENCE OF SARS

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WASHINGTON, DC, July 30, 2003 – The following is a statement by Shelley A. Hearne, DrPH, Executive Director, Trust for America's Health in response to today's hearing "SARS: Best Practices for Identifying and Caring for New Cases," held by the U.S. Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations:

"Subcommittee Chairman, Senator Norm Coleman, deserves the nation's thanks and admiration for his foresight in identifying ways to prepare proactively for a possible, likely reemergence of SARS in the coming months. In public health, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Best practices today could mean saving lives tomorrow.

"With regards to SARS overall, America has been lucky. Our future preparedness for a SARS reemergence or other public health threats, be they from Mother Nature or bioterrorists, hinges on improved rapid investigation and response capabilities. For the U.S., SARS was but a minor test of our nation's public health defenses, yet one that reinforced the need for better disease tracking, improved communications systems, increased public health laboratory capacity, and a well-trained clinical and public health workforce. We are heartened that Senator Coleman is addressing these issues in the context of SARS and are hopeful that the Subcommittee's work now will pay huge dividends should SARS or another public health crisis strike."

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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.