



**TFAH Praises Signing of Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act, Focus Must Now Turn Toward Accountability and Effective Implementation**

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**WASHINGTON, December 19, 2006** – The following is a statement by Jeffrey Levi, PhD, Executive Director of Trust for America's Health (TFAH):

“Trust for America's Health applauds the signing of the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act into law today. This legislation will help advance and improve public health preparedness post-September 11<sup>th</sup>, and has the potential to address ongoing vulnerabilities. If properly implemented, the Act will also enhance sorely needed accountability for preparedness. Americans deserve more information about how effectively their communities are protected.

While we are encouraged by the enactment of the bill, the President and Congress must now commit the resources necessary to effectively implement the provisions of the statute. In recent years, tens of millions of dollars have been cut from state public health preparedness funds. Without continued and secure funding, it will be impossible to take serious steps toward better preparedness.

Major challenges also remain to be addressed, including dealing with the impending ‘brain drain’ of the public health workforce, and bolstering the ‘surge capacity’ ability to respond to massive emergencies which could overrun our health system.

The Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), which is a component of the legislation, also represents a major step forward. If properly implemented, BARDA could jump-start a new cycle of innovation in vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics needed to combat health threats.”

Last week, TFAH issued a report “Ready or Not? Protecting the Public's Health from Diseases, Disasters, and Bioterrorism,” which found that half of states scored six or less on a scale of 10 possible indicators for health emergency preparedness capabilities. The report is available on TFAH's Web site at [www.healthyamericans.org/reports/bioterror06](http://www.healthyamericans.org/reports/bioterror06).

*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. [www.healthyamericans.org](http://www.healthyamericans.org) and [www.pandemicfluandyou.org](http://www.pandemicfluandyou.org).*

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