

News from

Representative Rush Holt

12th District, New Jersey

<http://www.holt.house.gov>



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HOLT WRITES TO HHS SECRETARY THOMPSON REGARDING FLU VACCINE

***Asks for information on plans to address shortage,
meet needs of vulnerable citizens.***

(Washington, DC) – Today, Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ) wrote to Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson requesting information on what steps the Department is taking to obtain additional stocks of flue vaccine. A copy of the letter is attached.

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Congress of the United States

October 15, 2004

Committee on Education
and the Workforce

Permanent Select Committee
on Intelligence

Member
Congressional Arts Caucus
Congressional Working Group on Children
Congressional Fire Services Caucus
Sustainable Development Caucus
Internet Caucus
Law Enforcement Caucus

The Honorable Tommy Thompson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
Room 416 G
Hubert Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I was troubled to learn this morning that the plan outlined by the President earlier this week to remedy the shortage of flu vaccine in America is not a viable option. My purpose in writing now is to ask, as a matter of urgency, what other options HHS and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) are pursuing to supplement current supplies of flu vaccine, and according to what timetables. In New Jersey, for example, nearly all of the long-term care facilities which have been supplied by the Chiron Corporation in the past are without flu vaccine now, and our senior citizens are understandably growing more concerned with every passing day.

In the short-run, what criteria are being applied now by DHS and CDC to re-direct supplies of currently available supplies of flu vaccine to states where clear and demonstrable shortages exist for high-risk populations? What information and documentation are you requiring from state and local public health officials to justify having supplies re-directed to them? Are other forms of the flu vaccine available that HHS or the CDC could purchase with the funds that would have been used for vaccines from Chiron?

Recognizing the long lead-time required to produce and/or acquire more than 100 million doses that will be needed for flu season next year, what actions are needed now to ensure that adequate supplies can be produced, preferably in the U.S.?

Your prompt responses would be very much appreciated, as they will help me and other public officials inform our constituents about the best course of action.

Sincerely,

RUSH HOLT
Member of Congress

Cc: Dr. Ann Gerberding, CDC Director
Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the
National Institute of Allergy and
Infectious Diseases