

cutting-edge technology. It will serve as a new biologics manufacturing and vaccine filling facility that will create over 320 high-tech and research jobs for Massachusetts. It represents a resurgence of public health care and economic revitalization on the site of the old Boston State Hospital in Mattapan. This new facility will enable MBL, with the support of UMass Medical School, to respond to new global health challenges.

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Pandemic Preparedness and Response Act of 2005 **Senators Reid, Obama, Bayh, Kennedy**

Public health experts have warned that an avian influenza outbreak could ignite a worldwide pandemic that would threaten the lives of millions of Americans. The consequences of a pandemic could be far reaching – impacting virtually every sector of our society and our economy. Top Administration officials have admitted that our nation is dangerously unprepared for the serious threat of avian influenza. Action is urgently needed to protect the nation from the threat of pandemic flu. That is why Senate Democrats are introducing the **Pandemic Preparedness and Response Act of 2005**.

The bill will:

□□□□ **Prepare for a pandemic by finalizing, implementing, and funding pandemic preparedness and response plans.** We need a detailed plan outlining a coordinated national strategy to address a flu pandemic. The Pandemic Influenza Response and Preparedness Plan, which the World Health Organization deems essential to proper readiness, has yet to be finalized, despite having been released in draft form over a year ago. As a result, federal and state preparations for avian flu pandemic have been needlessly delayed.

The Pandemic Preparedness and Response Act:

□□□□□ Creates a Director of Pandemic Preparedness and Response within the Executive Office of the President who will be responsible for finalizing and making operational the National Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan. The Director will coordinate the federal interagency preparation for and response to a pandemic.

□□□□□ Ensures that, among other things, the National Pandemic Plan includes a specific focus on traditionally underserved populations, including low-income, racial and ethnic minority, immigrant and uninsured populations.

□□□□□ Establishes accountability for the national preparation for and response to a pandemic.

□□□□□ Expands and coordinates State Pandemic Preparedness Activities, with emphasis on surveillance, preventive and medical care, workforce development, distribution plans for vaccines, antivirals and other treatments, communication and information networks, maintenance of core public health functions, security, and integration with national activities and existing bioterrorism preparedness activities.

□□□□ **Improve surveillance and international partnerships so we may monitor the spread of avian influenza and detect the emergence of a flu strain with pandemic potential**

immediately. It will take several months to develop an effective vaccine against the avian flu once we have been able to identify the particular flu strain with pandemic potential. One of our best opportunities to limit the scope and consequences of any outbreak is to rapidly detect and contain the spread of a new strain that is capable of sustained human-to-human transmission.

The Pandemic Preparedness and Response Act:

- Provides assistance for international pre-pandemic surveillance and medical care.
- Establishes and implements a comprehensive diplomatic strategy targeted at nations in Southeast and East Asia most at risk for an epidemic of the avian influenza in order to strengthen our ability to detect, prevent and effectively respond to an outbreak of the avian flu.
- Creates an International Fund to support pre-pandemic influenza control and relief activities in countries affected by avian influenza.
- Expands domestic and international efforts by the Department of Agriculture to prevent pandemic avian influenza.
- Improves state surveillance efforts.

□□□□ **Protect Americans through the development, production, and distribution of an effective vaccine.** Our existing stockpile of vaccines – assuming they are effective against a future, unidentified flu strain – may protect less than one percent of all Americans. We have only one domestic flu vaccine manufacturer located in the United States. If our capacity to produce vaccines is not improved, it could take 15 months just to vaccinate our first responders, medical personnel and other high risk groups.

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The Pandemic Preparedness and Response Act:

- Expands Research at the NIH on influenza vaccines and treatment.
- Establishes a mass tracking and distribution system for antiviral medications and vaccines.
- Enhances vaccine production capacity by creating a guaranteed market for seasonal flu vaccine through a federal buyback program for a portion of unsold doses.
- Improves access to vaccinations during a pandemic by enhancing annual flu vaccination coverage for uninsured and underinsured adults and children

□□ **Plan ahead for a pandemic by stockpiling antivirals, vaccines, and other essential medications and supplies.** Antiviral medication will be a crucial stopgap defense against a pandemic because it will take several months to develop, produce and distribute a vaccine.

Other nations have ordered enough Tamiflu, an antiviral pill, to cover between twenty and forty percent of their populations. The United States only has enough antiviral pills in its stockpile to cover 2 percent of its population. We also need to ensure that we have an adequate supply of other medications and medical supplies, such as masks and gloves, in our national stockpile.

The Pandemic Preparedness and Response Act:

- Requires procurement of antivirals to cover a minimum of 50 percent of the population for the Strategic National Stockpile.
- Requires procurement of a minimum level of vaccines, medications and other supplies for the Strategic National Stockpile.
- Protects Americans from price-gouging of medications during a pandemic.

□□□□**Strengthen our public health infrastructure.** The nation’s public health infrastructure is weak, and our hospitals and health care providers lack adequate surge capacity to respond to a pandemic.

The Pandemic Preparedness and Response Act:

□□□□□Improves surge capacity to ensure an adequate supply of health care providers and institutions to care for affected Americans in the event of a pandemic.

□□□□**Inform Americans by increasing awareness and education about pandemic flu.** A pandemic could impact virtually every sector of our society and our economy. The medical community must be trained to distinguish between the annual flu and the avian flu so that an outbreak could be reported immediately. Businesses and the American public need to be educated about the steps they can take to prepare for and respond to an avian flu outbreak.

The Pandemic Preparedness and Response Act:

□□□□□Expands research at the CDC for communication and behavioral strategies for the general public.

□□□□□Ensures that public education and awareness campaigns targeted to businesses, health care providers and the American public related to pandemic preparedness are conducted.

□□□□**Commit to protecting Americans by devoting adequate resources to pandemic preparedness.** Many programs that will dramatically reduce the consequences of a future avian flu outbreak are unfunded or massively underfunded. The Senate approved a Democratic amendment to the Department of Defense appropriations bill to begin providing the resources needed to address this threat. **The Pandemic Preparedness and Response Act** will ensure that adequate resources are available to address this looming threat.

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY AT THE UMASS MEDICAL CENTER/MASSACHUSETTS BIOLOGIC LABORATORIES

(As prepared for delivery)

Remarks
Massachusetts Biologic Laboratory Ribbon-Cutting
October 21, 2005

Thank you so much, Jack, for that generous introduction. Jack’s done a wonderful job for the University of Massachusetts system, and he’s renowned for his dedication to good causes across the Commonwealth. He knows what higher education and innovation can do to strengthen economic development. And that’s what today is all about.

So it's an honor to be here to participate in the opening of this new facility. The Massachusetts Biologic Laboratory is a unique asset for our state. It's the only self-sustaining, publicly-operated vaccine research and manufacturing facility in the country.

In fact, the Laboratory itself has been functioning for more than a century, its had an essential role in establishing the tradition of excellence and innovation in health care here in Massachusetts. As this new facility demonstrates, the Laboratory and UMass Medical School are committed to carrying on that tradition well into the future.

The field of the life sciences will continue to be critical for the health of our people and the Commonwealth as a whole with this new state- of-the-art facility. Massachusetts will continue to have access to critical vaccines against diphtheria, tetanus and other illnesses. It will continue to do the research, and produce the orphan drugs for which there is an urgent need but only a small market. Not many companies out there have the flexibility to do that. So this facility is a tremendous asset not only for all of us in Massachusetts, but for the nation and for public health initiatives around the world.

MBL was there to respond to the SARS outbreak a few years ago and within just six months, it produced a potential treatment for the disease. That is an impressive achievement by any standard and I commend Dr. Ambrosino, for her leadership in responding to these urgent public health challenges.

We'll always have potential public health threats – we have a new one on our hands with the avian flu. Sadly, the steps have not been taken in recent years to see that we are prepared. Flu medicine has not been stockpiled. Funding for public health has been cut, and the nation lacks even a basic plan to deal with a pandemic. I hope Congress will act quickly to approve legislation I have introduced to strengthen public health preparedness, improve our stockpiles of flu medicine, and accelerate the development of new vaccines and treatments for the disease threats we face.

Developing new vaccines is the most effective defense against a pandemic. As a publicly owned vaccine manufacturing facility, MBL has a unique role in helping make the vaccines that the nation so urgently needs. Providing incentives for industry to develop new medicines is a part of our response to health threats such as pandemic flu, but expanding the role of publicly operated facilities can help see that the nation has the capacity to produce essential vaccines in times of need.

UMass and Massachusetts Biologic Laboratories are helping in another essential way to protect the future health of our communities. By expanding into the old Boston State Hospital, you're injecting new life into Mattapan and maintaining its presence in Jamaica Plain.

The new laboratory means new jobs, new residents, and new commerce for the community. And these are good jobs for all – scientists and engineers, manufacturing associates, lab technicians and support staff.

These are the jobs of the future and we need to find effective ways to encourage more of them.

That means educating our youth in math and science and investing in research and development. If we do, we'll have continuing excellence in the life sciences for Massachusetts and the nation. We're grateful to MBL for all its done to make Massachusetts a leader in biotechnology. On this auspicious day, the future is bright and all of you are the reason why. We're very very proud of you and we thank you for all you do so well.