

**Summary of Remarks by
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and Human Services
Pandemic All-Hazards Preparedness Act
Stakeholders Meeting
November 8, 2007**

The Department of Health and Human Services and the rest of the Federal Government continue to evolve to meet the challenges of emergency preparedness and response. The attacks of September 11, 2001, the anthrax attacks, the hurricanes and natural disasters – both those that have occurred and potential events – revealed that we need to strengthen our preparedness and response activities and capabilities, at all levels of government, and within the private sector as well.

Legislation has been enacted since September 11, 2001. In 2002, the Bioterrorism Act was enacted and, among other things, it authorized HHS to implement public health and emergency medical programs. Then in December 2006, the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA) was introduced in the Senate by Senator Richard Burr, passed and was signed into law by the President.

PAHPA has broad implications for preparedness and response, beginning with the creation of the primary person responsible for health and human services' preparedness and response, the newly created position of Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR). PAHPA creates new authorities for HHS, with ASPR at the lead, with aggressive timelines. It applies to all of HHS – all the components of the Department – working across the Federal Government, with the States and localities, the end-users of this legislation.

When the legislation was passed, the Admiral created a Senior Steering Committee within the Department, comprised of all of the Agency heads across HHS, for example, the head of the CDC, the FDA, NIH, the Office on Disability, and all of the heads of the staff divisions. The Implementation Team is the next tier, comprised of senior staff that meet weekly to collaborate, coordinate and ensure that we're filling in the gaps and not being redundant. We have eight work groups leading the component pieces of the legislation. We've also developed subgroups to address specific issues and challenges.

The continued involvement of stakeholders is critical to us. We've met with some of you already, and we want to meet with you continually as we move forward. We want to share with you today our progress thus far, talk about additional work that is required, and most of all, hear your concerns and recommendations. We are not going to have all the answers today. Some panels will have a lot of information, some are just beginning. But, we will be getting back to you and engaging with you in the future.