

United States

On November 1, 2005, U.S. President George Bush implemented a three-part strategy to address a possible influenza pandemic outbreak. This includes: 1) preparedness and communication; 2) surveillance and detection; and 3) response and containment. Furthermore, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released a more detailed plan, which outlines the federal response to a possible influenza pandemic. The HHS plan provides guidance to state and local governments on what should be accomplished to prepare for an influenza pandemic. Recently, the HHS Secretary reiterated that state governments will take the lead, explaining that final decisions regarding preparedness will be left to state and local officials. Ninety percent of vaccines will be allocated to states and the state authorities will be in charge of distribution.

On October 23, 2007, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) published the "Draft Guidance on Allocating and Targeting Pandemic Influenza Vaccine" [hereinafter "Draft Guidance"]. A government working group developed the plan and sought input from the public through a Request for Information (RFI). PPTA submitted comments in response to the RFI in January 2007. PPTA requested HHS follow the recommendations made by the HHS Advisory Committee on Blood Safety and Availability (ACBSA) and recognize the plasma protein industry as a key element of the critical infrastructure, including vaccine prioritization of Source Plasma operations and fractionation facility employees, in the HHS Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Plan. However, the recommendation was not included in this recently published Draft Guidance. The Draft Guidance states work is ongoing to further assess and hone definitions and population sizes for these different groups. PPTA submitted comments on this Draft Guidance on December 19, 2007. PPTA will continue to be proactive and insert the collection centers and fractionation facilities into the public debate. However, it is important that member companies work with PPTA staff to ensure that the plasma industry is included in processes currently being established at all levels - federal, state, and local.