



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

FEB 26 2007

Colonel J. Christopher Murphy
Director
Alabama Department of Public Safety
P.O. Box 1511
Montgomery Alabama 36102-1511

Dear Colonel Murphy:

Thank you for your invitation to attend the Alabama Public Safety Law Enforcement Pandemic Summit. Unfortunately, I am unable to participate; however, I would like to take this opportunity to reinforce the importance of this inaugural event.

I commend the Alabama Departments of Public Safety and Public Health for fostering planning efforts across multiple levels of government and across multiple sectors of society. A pandemic will significantly affect the health care infrastructure, but its impact will also be felt by transportation systems, workplaces, schools, public safety and more. Pandemic planning will require an understanding of the interdependencies of all levels of government, the private sector, families and individuals and the need for cooperative planning is great. Your summit will be reinforcing this message and I thank you for your efforts.

Law enforcement plays a critical role in any type of emergency. In times of crisis and instability, among other things, public safety officers are responsible for maintaining public order, providing security for emergency responders and supporting the implementation of any necessary control measures. During a pandemic, the continued effectiveness of these services will be absolutely essential to a community's resiliency.

There is much that can be done to prepare the public safety community. The first step is to hold summits, such as this one, to share information about pandemic influenza, review plans already in place, and foster additional planning efforts that will almost certainly be needed.

By holding this event, Alabama is taking great strides towards pandemic preparedness. I know it will be a productive morning that will inspire additional planning conferences and events. Thank you again for your kind invitation.

Sincerely,

Michael O. Leavitt