

The Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (S. 3678)

This legislation reauthorizes the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-188) to protect the public more effectively and efficiently by responding to public health emergencies with a clear line of authority from local to state to federal officials. It also builds on the Project BioShield Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-276) to accelerate advanced research and development of drugs and vaccines to protect the United States from health emergencies, such as bird flu. By building on the lessons we have learned from Hurricane Katrina and September 11th, this bill will improve our public health and medical preparedness and response capabilities for emergencies.

- Identifies the Secretary of Health and Human Services as the lead federal official responsible for public health and medical response to emergencies.
- Unifies HHS preparedness and response programs under a re-named Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, including moving the National Disaster Medical System from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to HHS.
- Reauthorizes over \$1 billion per year in federal funding through grants from HHS for state and local public health and medical preparedness.
- Stresses accountability by requiring HHS to establish evidence-based benchmarks and performance standards to measure progress, and requires States to measure and report on these activities.
- Modernizes how public health departments detect, respond to, and manage public health threats, by collecting instant electronic information which will enable public health officials to make informed decisions before, during, and after a public health emergency.
- Improves the management and readiness of the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps to respond to emergency health care needs.
- Strengthens the nation's public health infrastructure by offering loan repayments to recruit and train a stronger public health workforce, capable of responding to emergencies.
- Improves training, logistics, and planning for health care providers and volunteers to ensure emergency medical care can be delivered faster during a disaster.
- Promotes the use of mobile hospitals and alternative federal facilities which can help handle an increased number of patients during an emergency.
- Improves our ability to quickly develop countermeasures to protect against deadly threats such as pandemic flu and bioterrorism. The process for developing new drugs and vaccines still takes up to a decade and costs hundreds of millions of dollars.
- Reorganizes and enhances HHS medical countermeasure research, development, and procurement activities. The Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) will be an aggressive venture capitalist partnering with universities, research institutions and industry on the advanced development of promising drugs and vaccines.
- Creates a National Biodefense Science Board to advise the Secretary on threats, challenges and opportunities presented by advances in biological and life sciences.