

July 23, 2009

The Hon. Nicole Lurie, MD  
Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave., SW  
Room 638G  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Dr. Lurie:

Personal protective equipment (PPE), including respiratory protection, is essential to an effective defense against pandemic influenza. The International Safety Equipment Association (ISEA), the trade association for personal protective equipment, urges the Department of HHS to replenish and supplement the stocks of respiratory protection and other PPE in the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) to meet the nation's public health needs. At the same time, HHS should publicize the need for businesses and public institutions to stockpile adequate supplies of PPE.

In a presentation to the ISEA Respiratory Protection Group in November 2007, HHS's Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) estimated that 5.3 billion N95 respirators would be needed in the event of a pandemic, for health care workers, public safety workers and the general public. The Food and Drug Administration released 25 percent of the SNS to state public health departments in May 2009, leaving an estimated 79.9 million respirators in the stockpile.

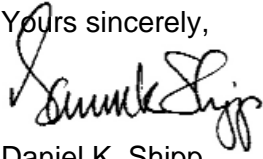
BARDA's analysis further assumes that 25-30 percent of N95s imported into the US each year would not be available in a severe pandemic because foreign governments where these respirators are produced would not allow products to leave the country. Manufacturers of these devices in the US are working at capacity to fulfill existing orders placed by regular customers, US government agencies, other nations, employers and distributors. Without HHS taking immediate action to acquire additional quantities of respirators, there could be significant shortages when a prolonged surge in demand is caused by a severe influenza outbreak. In the event that a massive turnover of the SNS occurs, HHS should encourage all manufacturers to participate in the government procurement program for PPE. This aligns with HHS's goal to have a substantial base of manufacturing for this equipment.

Other nations have already taken steps to safeguard responders and healthcare workers. France has stockpiled 685 million N95-equivalents for its first responders for a population 1/5th of the U.S. That would generate a need in the US for a stockpile of over 3.4 billion respirators – just for first responders. In 2007, the government of Ontario Province, Canada, where SARS killed 45 people including two nurses and one doctor, has stockpiled 55 million N95 respirators to ensure that health professionals are protected in case of another biological outbreak.

In addition to procuring respiratory protection for the SNS, ISEA urges HHS to widely publicize the need for all potentially affected businesses, responders, employers and others to evaluate the PPE needs for their organizations to carry out vital functions and ensure business sustainability, and to order appropriately now for the looming flu season. Some hospitals located in states that received portions of the stockpile still had only two days of respiratory

protection available. HHS needs to communicate the sense of urgency for the health care industry to prepare adequately for a massive public health event.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel K. Shipp". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Daniel" being the most prominent.

Daniel K. Shipp  
President

cc: Hon. David Obey  
Hon. Daniel Inouye  
Dr. Christine Branche, NIOSH  
Les Boord, NIOSH/NPPTL  
Jon R. Krohmer, Acting Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs and Chief Medical Officer,  
DHS