

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 672

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the private-sector distributors of the influenza vaccine should give priority to distributing the available vaccine to those people at a high risk of developing complications from an influenza infection.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 8, 2000

Mr. GREEN of Texas submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the private-sector distributors of the influenza vaccine should give priority to distributing the available vaccine to those people at a high risk of developing complications from an influenza infection.

Whereas influenza is a contagious viral infection that affects the respiratory tract;

Whereas people of any age can become infected with influenza;

Whereas, although most people who become infected with influenza recover within a few days, some people develop serious complications that can become life-threatening;

Whereas influenza causes thousands of deaths each year, mostly among the elderly;

Whereas vaccination can prevent a person from becoming infected with influenza;

Whereas the periodic mutation of the influenza virus requires the influenza vaccine to be annually updated to contain the most recent influenza virus strains;

Whereas a lower-than-expected yield of one of the components of this season's influenza vaccine has caused the distribution of the vaccine to be delayed;

Whereas the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, and the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are working closely with vaccine manufacturers to facilitate the availability of a safe and effective influenza vaccine for this influenza season;

Whereas temporary shortages of the influenza vaccine early in this influenza season may require decisions to be made regarding how to prioritize the use of the available vaccine;

Whereas the vaccine available early in this influenza season should be used to maximize the protection of people at a high risk of developing complications from an influenza infection;

Whereas the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that the groups of people at a high risk of developing complications from an influenza infection are—

- (1) people who are 65 and older;

(2) residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities that house people who have chronic medical conditions;

(3) people who have chronic disorders of the pulmonary or cardiovascular systems, including asthma;

(4) people who have had required medical follow up or hospitalization during the past year because of chronic metabolic disease, kidney dysfunction, blood disorders, or immunosuppression;

(5) children and teenagers who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy; and

(6) women who will be in the second or third trimester of pregnancy during the influenza season;

Whereas all influenza vaccine used in the United States is produced in the private sector, and 90 percent of that vaccine is distributed by private-sector distributors for use by health care providers;

Whereas reports have indicated that certain distributors of the influenza vaccine are taking advantage of the influenza vaccine shortage by raising their prices by as much as 500 percent;

Whereas distributors are first supplying those buyers willing to pay the highest price for the influenza vaccine, even when those buyers were the last to order;

Whereas, for example, although the Director of the California Department of Health Services contracted with a distributor in February to purchase influenza vaccine at a cost of \$17.99 per vial and has received only one third of the order, the Director of the Maine Division of Disease Control contracted with that same distributor in June and July to purchase influenza vaccine at a cost of

\$39.00 per vial and received both shipments within two months; and

Whereas distributors are in a unique position to make vaccines available first to facilities serving people at a high risk of developing complications from an influenza infection, such as nursing homes, hospitals, and doctors offices: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
2 resentatives that the private-sector distributors of the in-
3 fluenza vaccine should make all reasonable efforts to en-
4 sure that, during any shortage of the influenza vaccine,
5 priority is given to distributing the available vaccine to
6 those groups of people identified by the Director of the
7 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as being at
8 a high risk of developing complications from an influenza
9 infection.

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