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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

March 31, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Last week I announced plans for a national immunization program to inoculate Americans against a swine-type influenza virus. Because of the serious nature of this virus, it is my hope that every man, woman, and child in the country can be inoculated before the end of this calendar year.

Since there are no precedents for an endeavor of this magnitude, I am issuing this directive to assure completion of the task in an appropriate, orderly, and timely manner. The Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, David Mathews, will take the lead in this effort, but it is essential that all federal department and agency heads give him their full cooperation in carrying out this program.

I have asked the Congress for a supplemental appropriation of \$135 million for this program. The Public Health Service, under the direction of HEW Assistant Secretary for Health, Dr. Theodore Cooper, will proceed with the planning and implementation efforts to make the vaccine available to all Americans. This activity will be carried out in close coordination with the Center for Disease Control, the Bureau of Biologics of the Food and Drug Administration, and the National Institutes of Health.

These efforts will include utilization of State and local health agencies in conducting immunization programs, and as distribution centers for vaccine. It will be necessary to have the full cooperation and participation of the private sector, as well as government, to assure the immunization of the total population in the brief time available. In particular, we will need to mobilize the vast resources of private sector health professionals and facilities.

NATIONAL INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION PLAN OBJECTIVES

- The vaccine must be tested in field trials for efficacy and effectiveness, and 215 million doses produced to immunize the entire population.
- The nation's health professionals must be encouraged to fully support this effort to increase the effectiveness of the immunization program.
- The public must be made aware of the importance of inoculation against this type of influenza virus through a nationwide citizen awareness program.

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- The vaccine, along with sufficient medical supplies and equipment, must be distributed through the State agencies. Every opportunity for inoculation must be maximized including mass immunization and the utilization of delivery points already in place, such as physicians' offices, health department clinics, community health centers, and public facilities.
- Epidemiologic and laboratory surveillance will be maintained to evaluate the effectiveness of this effort and to determine disease trends and outbreaks so that any necessary additional immunization and health efforts may be directed toward epidemic control.

Initial efforts are now underway by the Public Health Service.

Our goal is to ensure that the flu vaccine is available at public health facilities, hospitals, schools, and physicians' offices throughout the country and that a maximum number of Americans avail themselves of it. Clearly we have the scientific and medical resources to undertake this action. We will only succeed, however, by effectively mobilizing all units of government, including Federal, State, and local officials, the medical profession, hospitals, clinics, and the manufacturers of the vaccine.

Because the health of our nation is at stake, I intend to give this matter my direct and continuous attention, and I am asking each of you to make a similar commitment within your own organization.

GERALD R. FORD

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