

Received @ 11-30-05 BPM mtg
2005-0419



November 29, 2005

To the Members of the King County Council,

This letter is to express my support for establishing a local stockpile of antiviral medication for use during an influenza pandemic as part of a comprehensive approach to pandemic preparedness that includes development of healthcare system surge and emergency response capacity in King County.

I am a board certified Infectious Diseases physician, currently on the faculty of the University of Washington and working at PATH (Program for Appropriate Technology in Health), in Seattle. I have spent a considerable portion of my professional career studying the epidemiology of influenza virus infections, and I currently chair the Infectious Disease Society of America's Pandemic Influenza Task Force.

The Infectious Disease Society of America has officially recommended that the nation build an antiviral drug stockpile of 52-84 million courses (equivalent to approximately 25% of the U.S. population) to treat those who become sick from an influenza pandemic. However, the current federal stockpile is inadequate, containing only enough drugs for less than 2% of the population. Establishing a local stockpile to treat severely ill persons needing hospitalization, health care workers, and other pandemic first responders is a prudent step towards achieving local pandemic preparedness.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Kathleen M. Neuzil, MD, MPH
Senior Clinical Advisor, PATH
Clinical Associate Professor, University of Washington
Chair, IDSA Pandemic Influenza Task Force
1455 NW Leary Way
Seattle, WA 98107
kneuzil@path.org