

August 16, 2005

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Avian Flu Pandemic

Dear Senator Feinstein (Boxer, Congresswoman Woolsey):

The threat of a global pandemic of Avian Flu that could affect 25% of the population, killing many of those infected, makes this a national security threat as well as a logistical and financial challenge facing national, state and local public health departments. Such a global pandemic would share many characteristics with the deadly influenza epidemic of the early twentieth century.

The United States has fallen behind Canada, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong and other countries in preparation for such a global pandemic, including the purchase of the antiviral drug to provide prophylaxis or treat people who show symptoms of the flu. The United Kingdom has already stockpiled enough Tamiflu to treat 25% of its population, the projected number of people that would be affected in each country. The U.S. has stockpiled enough for 2% of the population.

Given its location as a high volume entry point to the United States from Asia, according to the report by Trust for America's Health, "A Killer Flu?" June 2005, California would be the first state to be exposed and the hardest hit with a projected 8,067,075 cases. According to that report, of those cases, 60,875 would die. California has ordered 68,956 courses of Tamiflu, leaving 7,428,119 Californians unprotected and untreated.

The County of Marin was able to use \$59,000 from a Homeland Security Grant to purchase treatment and/or prophylaxis to protect and treat 1,000 of our first responders. We have no resources to be able to purchase antiviral drugs for the population at large, or develop a protocol for how such drugs that are available will be effectively distributed.

Senate Bill 969 (Obama), "the AVIAN (Attacking Viral Influenza Across Nations) Act of 2005" was introduced in the Senate April, 2005 and referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. S. 969 would help increase funding to protect against this pandemic. It would also help educate the public and set up pandemic preparedness and response measures.

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Marin urges your support of S. 969 and other efforts that would dedicate more immediate resources for the research, development and stockpiling of necessary antiviral drugs; provide funding to local jurisdictions to set guidelines for deciding priority groups; develop a distribution plan; and make the antiviral drug more affordable.

Sincerely,

HAROLD C. BROWN, JR.  
President

Cc: Paul Schlessinger  
County Administrator Matthew Hymel  
Health and Human Services Director Dr. Larry Meredith  
Public Health Officer Dr. Fred Schwartz