

The Bush Administration Officials Who Should Be Protecting Your Health



**Secretary of
Health and
Human Services
Tommy G.
Thompson**

As head of HHS, Tommy Thompson is supposed to be the nation's leading advocate for the health and welfare of all Americans. He oversees all of the government institutions and officers, listed below, and thus holds primary responsibility within the Bush Administration for the malfeasance, and lack of action, on the flu vaccine crisis.

He largely ignored the recommendations of the National Vaccine Advisory Board, which in 2002 and again in 2004 called for major stockpiles of vaccine; the Board also called for government action to keep drug manufacturers in vaccine production, and discussed the government possibly having its own plant and contracting out for vaccine production—a feasible plan, given the necessity to eliminate the estimated 36,000 annual preventable deaths a year to flu. Thompson asked for minimal funds for a tiny government stockpile of less than 10% of flu vaccine produced. He never made the case for universal vaccination to protect the entire nation against infectious diseases. He asked for a few million for the stockpile, and the Republican-controlled Congress gave even less.

Thompson came to his office in 2001 with a record of

abandoning the needy to the vagaries of the “free market.” His claim to fame came when he was governor of Wisconsin, where he devised and pushed through the most stringent welfare “reform” in the country. W-2, or Wisconsin Works, forced women with young children to go to work for their checks, with the result that many children lost their medical coverage.



**Director of the
Centers for
Disease Control
and Prevention
Dr. Julie Louise
Gerberding, M.D.,
M.P.H.**

Dr. Gerberding, a Fellow of the Infectious Diseases Society of American and member of the American Epidemiology Society, became director of the center in July 2002. The CDC, an agency of the HHS, is considered the lead Federal agency for protecting the health and safety of people, with a special emphasis on “preventing and controlling disease, injury, and disability.” Yet, Dr. Gerberding did not move on the flu crisis, which has been in the making for months, until *after* the crisis broke. She repeatedly called for voluntary vaccine redistribution, because the CDC has no authority to demand redistribution.

**Acting
Commissioner
of the Food
and Drug
Administration
Dr. Lester M.
Crawford**



The FDA is another agency under HHS, the nation's principal agency for protecting the public's health and ensuring the safety of foods, drugs, and medical products. Dr. Crawford was appointed in April 2004, and has given a series of speeches devoted to reforming procedures for the drug companies. Those speeches indicate that the direction of this "reform" is to reduce regulation, thus leaving the nation more vulnerable.

Crawford, who says the "FDA's drug reviews have long been the gold standard for the world," told Congress on Oct. 8, 2004 that the FDA had found Chiron's corrective measures at its Liverpool, England plant to be "adequate."

**U.S. Surgeon
General Vice-
Adm. Richard H.
Carmona**



The Surgeon General, who also operates under HHS, is tasked with protecting and advancing the health of the nation, especially through advocating effective disease prevention. While Dr. Carmona, who was sworn in in August 2002, has called attention to the need to beef up the capability of "our already overburdened hospitals," he has been largely silent during this current public-health crisis.

**Director of the
National Institutes of
Allergy and Infectious
Disease (NIAID)
Dr. Anthony S. Fauci**



Dr. Fauci, who has been with the National Institutes of Health since 1968, became director of the infectious disease division in 1984. A major focus of NIAID is research into emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases and novel vaccine approaches, such as a move away from the procedures which lead to a long lead-time for vaccine production. Dr. Fauci has clearly been affected by the pressures from commercial drug producers for a profit, as shown in his statement to Fox News on Oct. 19 that "the problem with Americans is that they view flu shots as an 'entitlement.' "

**Secretary of
Homeland
Security Tom
Ridge**



While the Homeland Security Department does not have line responsibility for the current flu crisis, its mission statement called for "leading the unified nation in the effort to secure America," and to "protect against and respond to threats and hazards to the nation." Secretary Ridge has clearly not done this, and perhaps doesn't understand that the health of the population is part of national security. As Governor of Pennsylvania in the mid-1990s, Ridge personally presided over massive cuts in health care for that state's poor population, despite evidence that these cuts would result in an increased death rate.