

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC

Senators Burr, Harkin, Enzi and Casey Introduce Bill
to Better Prepare Nation for the Threat of Pandemics
or Bioterror Attacks

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) along with Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA), Mike Enzi (R-WY) and Bob Casey (D-PA) introduced the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act Reauthorization of 2011, a bipartisan effort to ensure that our nation is prepared to respond to a wide range of medical and public health emergencies, whether naturally occurring or the result of a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear attack.

As a result of the passage of the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA) of 2006, the federal government, in partnership with state and local governments, took significant steps to strengthen our nation’s medical and public health preparedness and response capabilities. While we are better prepared today than we were five and ten years ago, the H1N1 pandemic and other emergencies at home and abroad underscore the need to maximize America’s resilience to the full range of threats. Based on the lessons learned over the past five years, this reauthorization makes targeted enhancements to existing preparedness and response programs and authorities.

“The threats facing our nation are serious and we must address them accordingly. The American people expect us to do all that we can to prevent an attack and, if one should occur, be fully prepared to respond, including having safe and effective medical countermeasures readily available. While key progress has been made since PAHPA was signed into law, more work remains to be done,” Senator Burr said. “This legislation redoubles our efforts to protect the American people by strengthening our existing programs and making targeted improvements in areas in which we know we must do better, including ensuring that our nation’s medical countermeasure enterprise reflects and is prepared to respond to modern-day threats.”

“This reauthorization builds on a record of bipartisan cooperation that has strengthened our ability to respond to medical and public health emergencies over the past decade,” said Harkin, who is Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. “Applying lessons we’ve learned during the past few years, this bill enhances existing programs and authorities by ensuring that the needs of at-risk populations, in particular individuals with disabilities, are met when preparing for public health emergencies such as pandemic flu or threats from chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear agents, whether naturally-occurring or man-made.”

“We have made tremendous progress in strengthening our nation’s medical and public health preparedness and response capabilities in recent years, but more needs to be done,” said Senator Enzi. “The provisions in this bill address lessons learned and make targeted improvements to strengthen our nation’s ability to prepare for and respond to a range of public health emergencies. This legislation helps keep Americans safe by ensuring that we have a clear strategy for medical and public health preparedness and a response for all potential threats.”

“America faces a complex variety of hazards and threats, but this bill ensures that we continue to build our defenses against and increase our preparation for naturally occurring health emergencies or terrorist attacks,” said Senator Casey. “This legislation will ensure our nation’s resiliency is as robust as possible, making Pennsylvania’s cities and towns safer.”

This reauthorization strengthens national preparedness for and responses to medical and public health emergencies and disasters, optimizes state and local all-hazards preparedness and response efforts and collaboration, enhances medical countermeasure activities, and reauthorizes key medical and public health programs, including the Strategic National Stockpile and the BioShield Special Reserve Fund. Additional information regarding this bill can be [found here](http://www.scribd.com/doc/72289244/PAHPAonepager) (<http://www.scribd.com/doc/72289244/PAHPAonepager>) .

In addition to legislation reauthorizing PAHPA, Senators Burr, Harkin, Enzi, and Casey also introduced the Medical Surge Capacity Act to enable the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to better target and issue waivers under Section 1135 of the Social Security Act. This legislation will help optimize hospitals’ responses to emerging medical needs arising from a public health or national emergency. More information on this legislation can be [found here](http://www.scribd.com/doc/72289672/Medical-Surge-Capacity-Act-One-Pager) (<http://www.scribd.com/doc/72289672/Medical-Surge-Capacity-Act-One-Pager>) .

Senators Mikulski (D-MD), Alexander (R-TN), Liebermann (I-CT), Collins (R-ME), Hagan (D-NC), and Roberts (R-KS) are also co-sponsors of the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act Reauthorization of 2011. Senators Mikulski, Alexander and Roberts are co-sponsoring the Medical Surge Capacity Act as well.

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