



One Hundred Tenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

October 10, 2007

The Honorable Robin Hayes
130 Cannon House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Hayes:

R. King

I received your letter dated October 5th yesterday. Members of the staff from the Committee on Homeland Security have indeed been exploring public health security issues for events involving mass gatherings, such as major sporting events. They are looking to see how public health issues are addressed by the private- and public-sector folks running these large-scale events, and how the Department of Homeland Security is supporting these efforts to protect the public.

The immunizations you referred to in your letter – Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, tetanus, diphtheria, and seasonal influenza – are recommended to public safety professionals working in areas such as hospitals, holding areas, and similar locations. Since Committee staff members are visiting hospital and other health care facilities available at or near these venues, including areas where groups of people are detained before being transferred to other off-site facilities, I believe that the recommendation (not requirement) that our Congressional staff receive these same immunizations was sound.

I am sure you would agree that providing immunizations to personnel involved in public safety is good public health policy, and that there is no need to exclude congressional staff from taking the preventative measures that the public health community recommends – regardless of why and where mass gatherings are taking place. Diseases do not discriminate, and we should do what we can to fight them with the tools we have available to us, including immunizations. The Committee on Homeland Security is proud to do whatever we can to support the public health community in its efforts to ensure the health, safety, and security of our Nation.

Sincerely,

Bennie G. Thompson

Bennie G. Thompson
Chairman