Mike’s Public Health Preparedness Plan

A novel coronavirus is spreading around the world, unsettling markets and leaving Americans either worried—or wondering if they should worry. In these circumstances, strong leaders assure people that they understand the situation, clearly explaining the risks and describing the preparations are underway. Instead, President Trump’s initial response was to voice his hope that covid-19 will simply “go away” when the weather gets warmer. No scientist knows whether that is likely, and idle speculation helps no one.

Strong leaders also know that the best way to keep Americans safe from contagious disease is to prepare at home and to ensure that all other countries maintain public health systems robust enough to contain outbreaks abroad. Yet the White House has undermined pandemic preparedness since Trump took office. The Trump administration disbanded the National Security Council’s Office of Global Health Security, which was meant to combat emerging threats. And it has failed to adequately fund efforts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help developing countries build and strengthen their public health systems. As a result, the CDC has had to call advisers home from 39 countries.

Mike Bloomberg knows how to lead during times of public health challenges. In 2006, as mayor of New York City, he unveiled a Pandemic Influenza Plan, which included disease monitoring, building laboratory capacity, delivering vaccines and medicines, and preparing hospitals, mental health providers and city communications for a disease outbreak. The plan included input from city, state, federal and non-governmental partners, including the Office of Emergency Management and first responders. Additionally, while Mike was mayor, the city’s syndromic surveillance system monitored 60,000 health events every day, from ER visits to foodborne illnesses to potential terrorist attacks.

As president, Mike will begin to rebuild our nation’s public health from the moment he takes office. His plan will strengthen front-line preparedness—at home and across the globe. Mike will protect Americans against pandemics by building a reliable public health infrastructure around the world. And he will support scientists, fully fund the CDC, and invest heavily in vaccine research at the National Institutes of Health.

1. Prepare hospitals for national emergencies.

Mike will require that all hospitals comply with national emergency preparedness requirements. Most large-city hospitals have the resources to train their clinicians, practice response scenarios, and share resources with local health leaders. But given high staff turnover at hospitals, Mike will require continuous hospital staff training. At smaller hospitals, which may not have adequate resources, the federal Hospital Preparedness Program will provide extra support as needed – including funding for masks, IV fluids and other critical supplies that need to be stockpiled in advance of a public health crisis. Mike’s plan will:

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2. WSJ, CDC to Scale Back Work in Dozens of Foreign Countries Amid Funding Worries, January 2018.
• Restore funding to the Hospital Preparedness Program which has had its budget halved from FY 2003 to FY 2017 (from approximately $515 million to $255 million).

• Strengthen training guidelines to make sure that hospitals plan for natural and manmade disasters by coordinating with federal, state, tribal, regional and local public health officials.

• Fund emergency response equipment stockpiles for rural hospitals that need the assistance.

2. **Fully fund the CDC Center for Preparedness and Response.**

Preparedness begins before a new pathogen or virus emerges. Because the current White House has repeatedly cut funding for CDC preparedness efforts, it is now scrambling to prepare for covid-19, including a request for emergency funds from Congress. Mike will fully fund the CDC Center for Preparedness and Response – including the Public Health Emergency Preparedness program, which helps U.S. state and local health departments get ready for health disasters. He will also create an emerging infectious disease fund for the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) to rapidly support the development of countermeasures – diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines – without waiting for Congress to act. Under Mike’s leadership, the CDC will:

• Study medical supply chains and develop contingency plans for supply disruptions. If necessary, establish a manufacturing base in the U.S. for essential drugs and vaccines.

• Provide clear, factual communication about efforts to contain new viruses or other pathogens when they first emerge. These steps might include isolating people who are sick or have been exposed to the pathogen, announcing travel advisories or screening international travelers.

• Base all public health interventions on evidence.

3. **Invest in international preparedness.**

The Trump White House [eliminated](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-white-house-eliminated-office-of-global-health-security-at-national-security-council/2018/05/18/333b45b0-12e3-11e8-a959-af083e8b32cd_story.html) the Office of Global Health Security at the National Security Council. Mike will reestablish the NSC’s Office of Global Health Security and instruct it to prepare for and respond to disease and bioterrorism threats, including pandemics. This office will coordinate actions across all federal agencies and state and local governments.

In addition, Mike will invest in efforts that help countries around the world strengthen their public health responses. These steps will include:

• Funding for the CDC to research and respond to global health threats through the Global Health Security Agenda, which helps other countries build up their public health systems.

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7 HHS, *Department of Health And Human Services Fiscal Year 2017*.
• **Restore** funding for USAID programs such as the Preparedness and Response project, which builds public health systems abroad.

• Rebuild international relationships and work with the World Health Organization to address global health challenges.

4. **Invest in science to be ready for public health challenges before they emerge.**

The U.S. will contribute needed funds to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), which works with international partners to fund and coordinate the development of vaccines. Mike will double funding for the National Institutes of Health and dedicate a share of this investment to research on vaccines (including a universal flu vaccine), anti-viral drugs and antibiotics. When new viruses emerge, Mike will explain what the government is doing, in concert with private industry, to develop vaccines.

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