



IAEMSC

International Association of Emergency Medical Services Chiefs

Position Statement In Support of the First Responder Anthrax Preparedness Act (H.R. 1300)

The International Association of Emergency Medical Service Chiefs (IAEMSC) represents senior officials responsible for EMS response in the United States of America, Canada and other countries from throughout world. Annually, the IAEMSC membership is responsible for the oversight and management of millions of emergency responses to medical emergencies throughout the world in the urban, suburban, rural, and frontier environments.

The IAEMSC supports the First Responder Anthrax Preparedness Act (H.R. 1300) and its goal of allowing first responder access to Anthrax Vaccine Absorbed (AVA) from the Strategic National Stockpile. H.R. 1300 is responsible and vital legislation that would provide access to critical protective medical countermeasures for EMS providers. The Act provides a mechanism to support the personal health and safety of EMS providers who have the responsibility to care for patients in circumstances and environments that are potentially threatening to them, such as response to anthrax related acts of terrorism and other emergencies. We also support the intelligence, information sharing and educational components of the Act, supporting first responders' informed decision making on participation.

The Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) has acquired and maintained doses of the Anthrax Vaccine Absorbed (AVA) since 2005, in preparation for a significant event requiring deployment of the same to protect the nation. Annually, approximately four (4) million of these doses expire unused and are subsequently discarded. H.R.1300 provides the authorization to the Department of Homeland Security to commence a pilot program to distribute these excess vaccine doses to implement a voluntary first responder anthrax immunization program.

The IAEMSC believes this program will improve the protection of emergency responders in a fiscally responsible manner. Moreover, as this Act proposes voluntary participation, we view the First Responder Anthrax Preparedness Act as a measured approach that will allow the EMS Chief, the local responder, and the associated medical director to create a program that will be sensitive to the protective requirements, while leaving program implementation in their hands. Lastly, the fiscal savings from the program permit those who desire and require access to this immunization, a means to obtain it in the context of already distressed local EMS and community budgets.

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Approved:
International Association of EMS Chiefs
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