THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301-1200

HEALTH AFFAIRS

OCT 13 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (M&RA)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (M&RA)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (M&RA)
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD, DIRECTOR OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

SUBJECT: Interim Policy Guidance for the Use of Influenza Vaccine for the 2004-2005 Flu Season

In light of the announcement last week that the United States' influenza vaccine supply for the 2004-2005 flu season would be curtailed, I have directed a review of the Department of Defense (DoD) guidance for administering available vaccine. DoD will be affected by the same shortage as the rest of the nation, and there will not be sufficient vaccine to conduct business as usual.

DoD will provide influenza immunization to those critical operational forces who are conducting the Global War on Terror. Our top priorities are to immunize forces that are forward deployed in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, as well as forces who are preparing to deploy in the near future. We will also immunize those other forces that are designated as critical to our nation's defense. I have asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff for an expedited review of the priority groups that fall into this category and will publish final guidance within ten days.

DoD will administer the remainder of our limited flu vaccine supply in strict accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations published in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report dated October 5, 2004. The link to these guidelines is: http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/whoshouldget.htm.

The Services are directed to begin flu immunizations now for the deployed and deploying forces, as well as those high risk groups identified by the CDC. Anyone not in

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the high risk or deployed category, including active duty military not scheduled to deploy, should be deferred from vaccination at this time.

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cc:
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