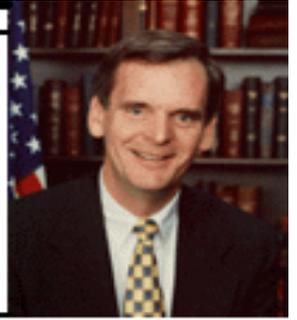


NEWS RELEASE

Judd Gregg

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 28, 2003

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GREGG HOSTS HEARING ON SMALLPOX VACCINE PROGRAM

Hears testimony from Portsmouth Regional Hospital official

WASHINGTON, DC— U.S. Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) today announced that the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee will hold a hearing on Thursday, January 30, to examine the Bush Administration's proposal to vaccinate Americans from smallpox. Among the witnesses testifying will be William J. Schuler, President and CEO of Portsmouth Regional Hospital in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

In December 2002, the Bush Administration announced its proposal to protect Americans from the threat of a bio-terror attack by vaccinating military personnel, first responders and healthcare workers against smallpox. Those vaccinations began last week.

This hearing will examine the best approach for implementation, liability and compensation for those who may be adversely affected and determining what needs to be done to ensure that children are eligible to receive the smallpox vaccine. Mr. Schuler, a hospital CEO for 24 years in New Hampshire and President of Portsmouth Regional Hospital for 19 years, will offer testimony on the vaccination plan from the perspective of the community hospital.

Senator Gregg commented, "We don't know what the future holds. But we do know that we have an obligation to make sure we are ready and able to protect the American people in the event of a bio-terror attack. Smallpox is a disease we routinely vaccinated against in this country prior to 1972. Due to the dark specter of terrorism, the disease could emerge again as a threat to our health and safety. We must be prepared to protect ourselves from this threat.

"However, we need to make sure the vaccine is administered in a way that protects healthcare workers and those on the front lines from undue risk, that those people are compensated if they are among the few who may become ill, and that any vaccine given to children has been tested, approved and found to be completely safe and effective. These are the issues we'll be addressing in our hearing."

Other witnesses to testify at the hearing will include: Julie Gerberding, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases; William Bicknell from the Boston University School of Public Health, John Abramson, MD, from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Martha Baker, R.N., co-chair of the Service Employees International Union Nursing Alliance.

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