

October 17, 2001

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians-American Society for Internal Medicine (ACP-ASIM), I want to congratulate you on your recommendation to Congress toward combating bioterrorism. ACP-ASIM is the nation's largest medical specialty society, representing 115,000 physicians and medical students who specialize in internal medicine.

For years, the College has been deeply concerned about the threat of bioterrorism to the public health and how unprepared physicians, nurses, and the medical and public health organizations are. Disaster planning for responding to a biologic weapon threat is a serious one that we believe neither the physician community nor the public health structure of the United States is adequately equipped to control.

That is why we strongly support your Administration's recommendation that the Congress allocate an additional \$1.5 billion in new funds toward the Department of Health and Human Services' efforts in preparing for a bioterrorist attack. This amount, coupled with your Administration's initial \$345 million request, would allocate more than \$1.8 billion for FY 2002. The funding will go directly toward an expansion of the nation's National Pharmaceutical Stockpile by increasing the production of smallpox and anthrax vaccines, strengthening local and state public health infrastructures, and providing for the necessary planning and training of primary care physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals.

ACP-ASIM remains committed to working with Congress and the White House to become an effective defensive force against bioterrorism. While the College recognizes that other similar proposals exist to combat bioterrorism, none are as comprehensive as the Administration's. Therefore, we strongly support your Administration's proposal for bioterrorism preparedness funding, and encourage its immediate passage.

Sincerely,

William J. Hall, MD, FACP  
President