



Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

NEWS RELEASE

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Public Health Preparedness

Public Health Officers Association Urges Swift Action on Confirmation of Surgeon General Nominee

Landover, MD., May 25, 2007 — The Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service (COA), on behalf of its more than 7600 active duty, inactive, and retired members, welcomes the White House announcement that President Bush intends to nominate Doctor James Holsinger, Jr. of Kentucky as the Nation's 18th Surgeon General.

In addition to his role as the Nation's "Top Doc" and health educator, the U.S. Surgeon General also serves as the commander of the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. The PHS Commissioned Corps is a 6,000 strong cadre of uniformed health professionals who serve as the Nation's first line of defense in providing public health security, with over 80% belonging to the COA.

While COA is disappointed that the Administration did not select a career officer of the USPHS Commissioned Corps to be its leader, as is the case for the other six uniformed services, we do note General Holsinger's extraordinary qualifications and long and distinguished career in medicine and academia – and especially his 31 years of service as an officer in the Army Reserve.

Successful and sustainable public health interventions in the United States, and indeed the entire global community, require the vision and leadership of a strong US Surgeon General. Childhood obesity in this country is a grave national concern and must be a priority for the Surgeon General. Other high priorities include; The threat to global health from pandemic influenza; injury and violence; biologic, radiological, chemical, and explosive weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists; tobacco use; HIV/AIDS; the impact of environmental changes on population health; mental health; and the health access needs of poor and underserved populations in this country and around the world.

The Nation needs an experienced and qualified public health leader enabled with the resources and authority to transform the public health system to respond to the global public health infrastructure weaknesses and health threats we face in the 21st Century. COA encourages General Holsinger to be that leader for the USPHS Commissioned Corps and the entire Nation.

We urge the President to move swiftly to complete the formal nomination process and the Senate to act quickly and schedule an early confirmation hearing and vote.

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