Rep. Waxman has requested that the Committee on Government Reform hold an oversight hearing to examine the federal government's failure to establish an adequate stockpile of pediatric vaccines.

Five years ago, there were shortages of five routinely recommended vaccines covering eight serious diseases of childhood. In response to this crisis, the Bush Administration pledged in 2002 to create a 6-month stockpile of each vaccine "as soon as feasible." The Administration then budgeted over $700 million for this task.

Three years later, however, little progress has been made. As reported in yesterday's *Washington Post*, there are adequate amounts of only two pediatric vaccines in the stockpile. The stockpile does not contain any doses of the critical vaccine that protects against diphtheria, whooping cough, and tetanus. This situation presents a real threat to public health.

Without an adequate stockpile, even a minor disruption in vaccine supply can lead to shortages that place the health of millions of U.S. children at risk.

Documents and Links

- Letter to Chairman Davis