

The Center for Biosecurity— its origins and activities

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Why have a Center – a brief history

- 1995 – initial US strategy vs. terrorism
 - Train first responders in 120 cities to deal with nuclear and “chembio” events
 - Police, fire, emergency rescue
 - Few or no public health, medical, hospital staff
 - No funds to Dept. of Health & Human Services

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Need for Medical / Public Health Expertise

- Ad-hoc individual efforts to educate
 - Sept 97 – the first symposium at a national medical meeting
 - 1997-98 – 50+ special presentations
 - President Clinton requests \$173 million for DHHS

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A Center is Created

- Threat to civilians is great but Govt. response in health is lethargic
- A decision for the Center –1998
 - What agents are of greatest concern
 - What is known about them
 - Where are teaching materials
 - How can a broader professional audience be educated

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Securing Financial Support

- Foundations
 - *Health-Medicine* – “our trustees would be uncomfortable with bioterrorism in our portfolio”
 - *Arms control* – “we haven’t supported projects in Schools of Medicine or Health”
- A Congressional earmark
 - Senator Barbara Mikulski
- The Alfred Sloan Foundation
 - Foundation President Ralph Gomery

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A sampling of activities

- First national conferences for medical and public health professionals
- *Guidelines for Medical and Public Health Management of Bioterrorism* (>350,000 copies)
- New journal, only one of its kind, *Biosecurity and Bioterrorism*
- Web site—most frequently visited
- “Dark Winter” – a prelude to 9/11
- Briefings for Executive Branch, Congress, industry, academia, foreign governments
- An independent voice for media

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Has it made a difference?

- Budget of Health and Human Services
 - Increase from \$8 million to \$4.5 billion
- Strategy for strengthening public health and medicine now beginning to be copied by other governments
- Still, the only policy center with medical and public health expertise and a national and international perspective

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What the Center offers

- An independent voice, able to draw on a wide range of expertise and to analyze and speak out on critical issues of policy and operation
- A convening capacity to bring together industry, academia and government to work out new relationships in problem solving
- A recognized center of unbiased analysis

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