The original documents are located in Box 26, “3/24/76 - Remarks on the Anticipated Threat Posed by Swine Flu” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT ON SWINE FLU

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 1976
WE HAVE JUST CONCLUDED A MEETING ON A SUBJECT

THAT IS OF IMPORTANCE TO ALL AMERICANS, AND I WANT TO

REPORT TO YOU ON THE RESULTS.
ONE MONTH AGO, A STRAIN OF INFLUENZA —
SOMETIMES KNOWN AS SWINE FLU — WAS DISCOVERED AND
ISOLATED AMONG ARMY RECRUITS AT FORT DIX, NEW JERSEY.
THE APPEARANCE OF THIS STRAIN HAS CAUSED CONCERN WITHIN THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY, BECAUSE THIS VIRUS IS SIMILAR TO ONE THAT CAUSED A WIDESPREAD AND VERY DEADLY FLU EPIDEMIC LATE IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR. SOME OLDER AMERICANS TODAY WILL REMEMBER THAT 548 THOUSAND PEOPLE DIED IN THIS COUNTRY DURING THAT TRAGIC PERIOD.
DURING THE LAST FEW DAYS, I HAVE CONSULTED WITH MEMBERS OF MY ADMINISTRATION AND LEADING MEMBERS OF THE HEALTH COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS NEW APPEARANCE OF SWINE FLU.
I have been advised that there is a real possibility that unless we take effective counter-actions, there could be a new epidemic of this dangerous disease next fall and winter here in the United States.
LET ME STATE CLEARLY THAT AT THIS TIME,

NO ONE KNOWS EXACTLY HOW SERIOUS THIS THREAT COULD BECOME.

NEVERTHELESS, WE CANNOT AFFORD TO TAKE A CHANCE WITH

THE HEALTH OF OUR NATION.
ACCORDINGLY, I AM ANNOUNCING TODAY THE

FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

-- FIRST, I AM ASKING THE CONGRESS TO APPROPRIATE

135 MILLION DOLLARS PRIOR TO THEIR APRIL RECESS FOR THE

PRODUCTION OF SUFFICIENT VACCINE TO INOCULATE EVERY MAN,

WOMAN, AND CHILD IN THE UNITED STATES.
-- Secondly, I am directing H.E.W. Secretary David Mathews and Assistant Secretary Cooper, to develop plans that would make this vaccine available to all Americans during the three month period from September to November of this year.
-- FINALLY, I AM ASKING EACH AND EVERY AMERICAN TO MAKE CERTAIN HE OR SHE RECEIVES AN INOCULATION THIS FALL.
INOCULATIONS ARE TO BE AVAILABLE AT SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, PHYSICIANS' OFFICES, AND PUBLIC HEALTH FACILITIES.

THE REACTION TO THE SHOT, I AM TOLD, MAY MEAN A SORE ARM FOR A DAY OR TWO -- A VERY SMALL PRICE TO PAY FOR THIS VITAL PROTECTION.
THE FACTS THAT HAVE BEEN PRESENTED TO ME IN THE LAST FEW DAYS HAVE COME FROM MANY OF THE BEST MEDICAL MINDS IN THE COUNTRY. THESE FACTS DO NOT SUGGEST THERE IS ANY CAUSE FOR ALARM.
THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY ESSENTIALLY UNDERSTANDS WHAT WE ARE DEALING WITH, AND THEY WILL DEVELOP A VACCINE THAT WILL BE EFFECTIVE IN COMBATTING IT.
THE FACTS DO SUGGEST, HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS A NEED FOR
ACTION NOW -- ACTION BY THE GOVERNMENT, ACTION BY INDUSTRY
AND THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY,
ACTION BY OUR CITIZENRY.
WE ARE TAKING THE FIRST STEPS THIS AFTERNOON --

AND BEFORE NEXT WINTER, I HOPE WE WILL HAVE PUT THIS THREAT

BEHIND US.

THANK YOU.

END OF TEXT