

**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.**

### **Copyright Notice**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SPOKE . . . .

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

*have developed*

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