



### Why This Matters

In the event of any emergency, Federal employees are expected to continue operations to sustain agency functions. A pandemic is not a singular event, but may come in waves that last weeks or months. It may also pass through communities of all sizes across the Nation and world simultaneously, as demonstrated with the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic. The mounting risk of a worldwide influenza pandemic poses numerous potentially devastating consequences for critical infrastructure in the United States. It is imperative that DHS be prepared to continue mission-essential operations should a pandemic occur.

### DHS Response

The Department concurred with the intent of our recommendations, but did not fully agree with our findings. Specifically, it maintained that we focused too heavily on medical countermeasures and personal protective equipment, and did not fully consider other pandemic response strategies such as social distancing and physical barriers. Our audit focused on medical countermeasures and personal protective equipment because DHS spent millions of dollars on them and they are a critical part of overall pandemic preparedness.

#### For Further Information:

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## DHS Has Not Effectively Managed Pandemic Personal Protective Equipment and Antiviral Medical Countermeasures

### What We Determined

In 2006, Congress appropriated \$47 million in supplemental funding to DHS for necessary expenses to plan, train, and prepare for a potential pandemic. DHS reported that it spent this funding on personal protective equipment, pandemic research, exercises, and medical countermeasures to reduce potential effects of a pandemic and ensure the workforce can continue operations. We conducted an audit of the DHS pandemic preparedness efforts to determine if DHS effectively manages its pandemic preparedness supply of personal protective equipment and antiviral medical countermeasures.

DHS did not adequately conduct a needs assessment prior to purchasing pandemic preparedness supplies and then did not effectively manage its stockpile of pandemic personal protective equipment and antiviral medical countermeasures. Specifically, it did not have clear and documented methodologies to determine the types and quantities of personal protective equipment and antiviral medical countermeasures it purchased for workforce protection. The Department also did not develop and implement stockpile replenishment plans, sufficient inventory controls to monitor stockpiles, adequate contract oversight processes, or ensure compliance with Department guidelines. As a result, the Department has no assurance it has sufficient personal protective equipment and antiviral medical countermeasures for a pandemic response. In addition, we identified concerns related to the oversight of antibiotic medical countermeasures.

### What We Recommend

We made 11 recommendations that when implemented should improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's pandemic preparations. The Department concurred with the intent of all 11 recommendations.