

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CHURCHES AND FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS MEET AT ITC FOR PANDEMIC  
INFLUENZA AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**



*Dr. David Satcher*

(January 8, 2008 - Atlanta, GA) - With reference to the seemingly on again off again conversations about avian flu and now Pandemic Influenza, the adage “forewarned is forearmed” should be taken with more than a grain of salt. The Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) will bring faith and health leaders together to share essential information about Pandemic Influenza, Emergency Preparedness and Health Disparities, and how the Church and other faith-based organizations can play a significant role in preparing the community to respond to these health challenges. During a one-day conference, January 22, 2008 on the ITC campus, health experts will give pastors, church leaders, and the ITC community some sobering facts about pandemic influenza and health disparities along with community strategies for meeting these challenges when they surface.

Leading public health experts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention agree that the threat of a pandemic is a question of “*when*” rather than “*if*” it will occur. Further, they suggest that just as Hurricane Katrina demonstrated that communities need to plan and prepare for severe natural disasters, the community needs to plan and prepare now to help limit the spread of illness when the crisis arrives.

The ITC conference will begin with a registration/check-in at 8:30 a.m. in the James H. Costen Center with the opening session beginning at 9:15 a.m. Presenters will include:

- MORE-

*Dr. Scott Santibañez*



- Dr. Gerald Durley, Pastor, Providence Missionary Baptist Church, Atlanta
- Dr. J. Patrick O’Neal, Director of Preparedness, Georgia Division of Public

Health, Atlanta

- Dr. Scott Santibañez, Associate Director, Department of Health and Human Services- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta
- Dr. David Satcher, Former U.S. Surgeon General, Director for the Center of Excellence on Health Disparities, Morehouse School of Medicine, Atlanta

ITC’s Dr. Rueben Warren, Associate Director of the Institute for Faith and Health Leadership, will moderate the conference. He says, “Faith based churches and organizations are key partners in protecting the public’s physical health and safety as well as its spiritual growth and awareness. An informative word from the pulpit is always the greatest pipeline to the head and the heart of the community. And, the “beloved community” needs to come together readily to assist in the teacher mode and educate our people to respond with preparedness rather than fear.”

Former Surgeon General, Dr. David Satcher will address the ITC and clergy participants specifically on Health and Health Disparities and the relational impact of Pandemic Influenza and Emergency Response during the President’s Chapel Hour at 11 a.m. The afternoon session, in addition to identifying specifics of how the faith community should respond to the physical, social, psychological and spiritual needs of the community during crises, will present some models of response that have been developed and are already in place on college campuses.

For more information or to register, call 404-614-6394.