

Holly Springs, NC – Congressman David Price spoke at the opening of Novartis' new flu vaccine-producing facility in Holly Springs, North Carolina on Tuesday. The new facility, which has the capacity to create up to 150 million doses of vaccine, will be a crucial part of federal efforts to defeat emerging viral threats like H1N1 and seasonal flu.

The facility has already created 190 local jobs and will eventually bring 350 high-paying jobs to the area. The Congressman's remarks are below:

Good afternoon. I've been remembering the excitement and promise of the groundbreaking on this spot just over two years ago. But even then we could hardly have anticipated the circumstances under which we dedicate this world-class facility today—circumstances that redouble the significance of what Novartis will do here and of what local, state, and national leaders have done to bring us to this day.

First, we understand the economic impact. With 191 fulltime employees already hired and an additional 159 employees to be added by 2011, Novartis is bringing good, well-paying jobs to the Triangle. At this challenging economic time, this is a welcome affirmation of what our people and our communities have to offer. We will recover; we will recapture the promise of a diverse and growing economy. We welcome Novartis as a corporate citizen and we are heartened by what the company's investment here will mean to our community.

Second, we are celebrating the Triangle leading the way in domestic advanced vaccine manufacturing, a venture rendered all the more significant by the H1N1 outbreak we face. The science behind what this facility will do has been explained by others, and I remain in awe of it. It uses the first major advancement in vaccine manufacturing technology in more than 50 years. Flu vaccine made from cell cultures – not from eggs – is faster, simpler, more consistent and more reliable.

As Congress heard in H1N1 preparedness hearings, the United States needs vaccine production that is more reliable and domestically produced. Since the vast majority of influenza vaccinations are made abroad, Novartis, here in the Triangle, will put the United States in a better position to meet future influenza threats.

I was happy to work with Novartis, other North Carolina companies, and colleagues in Congress to secure funding over the last few years for pandemic influenza preparedness. Much of this funding went directly and indirectly into the building of this manufacturing plant, creating and maintaining essential jobs while addressing vital national health need.

We appreciate Novartis' commitment to North Carolina and the Triangle and the innovative products they produce to treat patients, ease suffering, and enhance quality of life for citizens around the world. We appreciate the team effort that encouraged and reinforced Novartis' happy choice of Holly Springs. Our celebration is genuine, but as is often the case on such occasions, it is combined with an awareness of the challenges that lie ahead and a determination to take them on together.

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