To the Editor:

While the debate continues on when to begin smallpox vaccinations, there is no public discussion at all about our state of readiness to deal with a large-scale bioterrorist assault using weaponized anthrax ("New Plan to Meet Smallpox Threat," front page, Sept. 24).

This is illogical, as the threat of smallpox is still hypothetical, while not that long ago we sustained a real attack using anthrax spores.

Last October, there was widespread anxiety about the possibility of further dissemination of anthrax spores and concern about the lack of availability of anthrax vaccine. Has that situation changed, and why is no one talking about it?

GILBERT ROSS, M.D.
Medical Dir., American Council on Science and Health