

Minnesota Responds



Central Region Public Health
Emergency Preparedness
Newsletter

MDH Central District Office
Midtown Office Building
3400 N. 1st St., Suite 305
St. Cloud, MN 56303

320-255-4216

Jan Jonassen, Public Health
Preparedness Coordinator

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER 2

What is Mass Dispensing and how can I help?

During a health emergency, most or all of the population in an effected area will need to be treated, assessed, or vaccinated within a short period of time. Over the years, Public Health has set up mass dispensing sites to give flu shots or to mass dispense medication to numbers of people. A huge event such as a pandemic flu, however, will require a large-scale utilization of mass dispensing that will cover the entire state of Minnesota. Every professional, para-professional, and emergency volunteer will be asked to help.

Where will this happen??

Public Health agencies within our 14 county Central Region have worked together to designate large areas, mostly gymnasiums, for mass dispensing sites. Memorandums of Understanding are already in place and groups of counties have been exercising and testing their sites and their ability to dispense medication to large groups of people. Public Health is planning to be ready for you so that when you respond to a call and arrive on the scene, you'll be trained for your specific function and put to work immediately. Our plans include resting areas, food, and protective equipment if it is needed. Security personnel will ensure that our medical supplies are secure and that you work in a safe environment at all times.

How does it work?

Register on the MN Responds web site: www.mnresponds.org . If you hold a license or certification, it will be verified by MN Responds. If mass dispensing sites need to be set up, you will be contacted and told when and where to respond. You may chose to respond at that time or not. Your name will be sent to your designated site so that a badge can be made for you to use during the event. You will need to show a photo ID at the site.

Contact your local Public Health Office for further questions.

Health Professionals Needed

- Nurses
- Physicians
- Nurse Practitioners
- Pharmacists
- Public Health Nurses
- Dentists
- Veterinarians
- Nursing Assistants
- Lab Personnel
- Health Educators
- Respiratory Care Specialists

Others Needed

- Social Workers
- Mental Health Professionals
- Language interpreters
- Chaplains
- Data Entry Personnel
- Support Staff
- RSVP Volunteers
- Students
- Retired from health field, EMS, fire, law enforcement or related field

Register now at
www.mnresponds.org

Essential Personnel

Essential Personnel are the people who are considered essential to the health and safety of the public. They will be given medication or vaccines first so they can do their job and protect everyone else. The Centers For Disease Control and Minnesota Public Health will make the decision about the priority of the categories and how many people will be included, depending on the amount of medication or vaccine the state has available. (See the list below in alphabetical order.)

You may already be a member of one or several of the categories. You may be called to report to a separate site to receive your medication or shot and then given instructions for reporting to the mass dispensing site or some other staging area.

Every effort will be made to protect volunteers at the Mass Dispensing Sites whether it is through medication, protective gear or both.



Categories

Emergency Management
Emergency Medical Services
Fire Services
Government Administration
Hazardous Materials
Health Care
Law Enforcement
Public Health
Public Safety Communication
Public Works
Transportation

The Strategic National Stockpile (SNS)

Should any act of terrorism, natural disaster, or disease pandemic occur, large quantities of medications and medical supplies will need to be readily available. The Strategic National Stockpile was created to meet the demands for rapid distribution of medication and medical supplies during a Public Health emergency.

The SNS supplies include antibiotics, chemical antidotes, antitoxins, life-support medications, IV administration, airway maintenance supplies and medical/surgical items. These supplies are packed in boxes on pallets that are sent to states and from there to distribution nodes situated around each state.

The decision to deploy the SNS pallets may be based on the agent released or the illness circulating. The CDC, Minnesota Public Health and other experts will determine when the Stockpile will be released to local areas.

National Incident Management System (NIMS)

We all need to know who's boss and in every emergency incident a boss is established who is called the Incident Commander. With the Commander will be a Safety Officer, a Public Information Officer (meeting the media), and a Liaison Officer. Under the Incident Command are four sections of people who have the primary responsibility of dealing directly with the crisis, disaster, or pandemic. The sections are Finance, Logistics, Operations and Planning.

Having a system of command that is consistent in language, structure, and that everyone uses, lessens the confusion and disorder that would occur without it. Professionals in the health field must learn the NIMS way of doing things so they can be helpful no matter what crisis befalls a community.

Learn for yourself the easy way, on the web at www.fema.gov. Go to training and click on IS 100.