



NEWS RELEASE

St. Charles County Government

Department of Governmental Communications

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St. Charles County Participates in Public Health Bioterrorism Exercise

Hundreds of volunteers and community responders made exercise a success

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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St. Charles County— In the event of a Bioterrorism attack or large-scale crisis, the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment must be prepared to quickly distribute mass quantities of lifesaving pharmaceuticals, antidotes, vaccines and other medical supplies to residents of St. Charles County. St. Charles County joined Missouri and Illinois state health departments, eight other local public health agencies in both states, and three hospitals to test their plans for mass distribution of these medications to the public.

In St. Charles County, public health employees staged a simulated distribution of medicine to prevent the infection of anthrax. The O'Fallon Elks lodge was the distribution site where volunteers from the community acted as role players and received medication from staff and volunteer nurses. Over 200 volunteers from the community, other local public health departments, police, and emergency rescue crews contributed to the success of the exercise.

"The goal of the exercise is to test our local public health emergency response plans and look for ways to improve our capacity to protect the health of St. Charles County residents," said Gil Copley, Director of St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment. "I am very proud of the community partnerships that have been established throughout our county and state. We would like to thank the many generous volunteers who came out to share their time and talents today. This exercise is a great way to strengthen those relationships, build our volunteer database and create a sense of teamwork that would be an essential part of any emergency response."

The federal government established the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) program to deliver large and continuous quantities of medical items to the site of a national emergency within 12 hours. During an emergency, state, local and private stocks of medical material could be depleted quickly. Therefore, the SNS Program stands ready for immediate deployment to any U.S. location in the event of a national emergency. Each 12-hour push package contains an assortment of medical products to help in a variety of possible biological, chemical or nuclear terrorism events. The local public health departments would be responsible for distributing the supplies to the local residents.

For more information on public health emergency planning and preparedness in St. Charles County visit us online at www.scchealth.org or call 636-949-7400.