

Responding to a Public Health Emergency

- Public Health Emergency Preparedness is a program sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that works towards protecting the public's health in the rare event of a large-scale emergency such as a biological agent release.
- If our city or region was faced with an emergency such as a biological attack involving the aerosolized release of anthrax, the County of San Diego (COSD) would be responsible for delivering lifesaving medications to 100% of their population within a 48-hour period.
- This process is called Mass Prophylaxis. The foundation of Mass Prophylaxis is the idea of “pulling” people into one central location to dispense large quantities of medication, in this case, antibiotics. This “pulling” process results in an efficient dispensing process and it also requires a tremendous amount of resources and logistical coordination.
- Dispensing of the medication would take place at Points of Dispensing or POD sites.

Points of Dispensing

- A **POD** site is one that a local public health department can activate, in an emergency, to dispense medications. The sole purpose of a POD is to quickly provide preventive medication to large numbers of people during a public health emergency in an effort to prevent illness.
- An **Open POD** is a public dispensing site that provides medications to the general public.
- A **Closed POD** provides medication to a targeted dispensing population such as hotels, private businesses, academic institutions, and hospitals.
- By partnering with the County of San Diego and operating a Closed POD, staff, customers, and their family members will receive medications at your site which reduces the likelihood they will need to visit a public POD.
- By agreeing to participate as a closed POD, your organization will recruit and train staff for key roles in the POD and utilize the Incident Command System (ICS), provide supplies, designate a suitable location on site where medication will be dispensed, provide security, follow County protocols and work with County staff to develop plans to operate the POD from start to finish.
- Public health emergencies can occur any time. It is important for your organization to be prepared to operate a Closed POD during regular business hours or during non-working hours.