

Jo Daviess County Health Department practices Mass Antibiotic Dispensing

Galena, IL - The Jo Daviess County Health Department and Emergency Partners conducted an emergency response exercise for mass dispensing of oral antibiotics at Jo Daviess County Health Department in mid-June. Jo Daviess County successfully provided an effective response to this public health emergency exercise scenario. At the same time, the exercise also revealed ways in which future responses could be made more effective.

The exercise was organized by the Illinois Department of Public Health with support from other city and state agencies. The full-scale mass dispensing exercise was conducted locally in collaboration with multiple partners including: Jo Daviess County EMA, Midwest Medical Center, Jo Daviess County Local Emergency Planning Committee, Jo Daviess County Sheriff's Department, Jo Daviess County MRC Volunteers, Illinois Department of Public Health, CDC, and Rockford Region Local Health Departments (Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside, Winnebago), The exercise focused on setting up Point of Distribution (POD) clinic locations used to rapidly dispense medication in the event of a public health emergency and properly communicating with and receiving timely medical supplies from the State Regional Distribution Center. Health Department staff and MRC volunteers participated as POD staff and also as volunteer subjects for the drill. Volunteers from the local community acted out various roles as patients for the dispensing exercise.

The County Emergency Management Agency activated its Emergency Operations Center and Mass Prophylaxis response plan; essential personnel were activated; and communication with Local, Regional and State partners was initiated to open a POD in the Jo Daviess County Health Department.

Onsite Incident Management was also conducted by the Health Department working as the lead alongside the County Emergency Manager in a unified command in order to safely meet the exercise objectives. Volunteer security personnel were on scene and had the area secured for the safety of staff and patients and kept traffic flowing in an orderly fashion. As individuals entered the POD, medical screenings were conducted. Patients completed all necessary paperwork and received information regarding the event as well as the medication they would be receiving. Individuals proceeded through the stations and mass dispensing was conducted using candy in lieu of pills.

This statewide exercise allowed the Jo Daviess County Health Department to obtain information that will allow them to plan how to respond efficiently, effectively and timely and enhanced All-Hazards Emergency Planning which is already in place.

Would you like to be a part of the action? Contact Jo Daviess County Health Department and ask how to be a member of the Medical Reserve Corps. Call 815-777-0263 for more information.