

Developing Business Partnerships

Mass Antibiotic Dispensing: Taking Care of Business

<http://www2a.cdc.gov/phtn/business>

CDC Satellite Broadcast, December 6, 2007

What's at stake in a bioterrorism event?

During a bioterrorism event such as a release of anthrax into the general population public health officials may be required to provide prophylaxis to the entire population in as little as 48 hours in order to save lives and prevent illness. Increasingly, public health planners are reaching out to community businesses and organizations to assist in a mass antibiotic dispensing campaign. It is a logical choice.

“...when you think about businesses, they have a lot of assets and resources that we in the public sector don't have. They have a lot of employees, they have a lot of space, they often have their own security systems...and so as potential partners they really have a lot to offer...”

*Susan Fernyak, MD, MPH, Director,
Communicable Disease Control and Prevention,
San Francisco Department of Public Health*

Business leaders, concerned about the health and safety of their workers, are anxious to contribute to community efforts in planning and have experience in responding to emergencies, and are willing to help.

“Our partnership with public health, like our partnerships with other community efforts, is another way we feel connected to the communities we live in.”

*Stasha Wyskiel, Manager
Business Continuity Planning, Gap Inc.*

What role can businesses play in a mass antibiotic dispensing campaign?

Businesses can

- Operate closed (private) Points of Dispensing (PODs) for employees and their families
- Supply volunteers to assist citizens at public PODs
- Provide information, transportation and other critical resources

What is the benefit?

When businesses provide prophylaxis to their employees, and possibly their families, both public health and businesses benefit. The burden on public PODs is reduced and businesses can maintain continuity of operations.

What can public health planners do to develop business partnerships?

- **Identify potential partners.** Select business partners based on the size and location of businesses in your area, their capability to provide resources, and your local dispensing needs.
- **Decide what you are asking of the businesses.** What is the scope and nature of the operation you expect partners to provide? Is it opening a closed/private POD for their employees, communicating information, or staging assets?
- **Generate a contact list.** Identify the most appropriate people in the business organization for you to contact. Every business operates differently and this step will ensure that necessary relationships and communication routes are in place.
- **Create materials.** Create hard-copy material that defines SNS, explains mass antibiotic dispensing, and identifies the potential scenarios in which assets may be deployed.
- **Examine and address regulatory and liability issues.** Dispensing laws are unique for each state and liabilities can be a major barrier to forming this kind of partnership. Public health planners should have some answer to the question of dispensing regulations and liability laws prior to approaching business, even if the answer is “we're working on it.”

Resources

Liability Resources:

- Emergency volunteer legislative toolkit from the The National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws at <http://www.uevha.org>.
- Entity liability partnership toolkit from the University of North Carolina School of Public Health at <http://nciph.sph.unc.edu/law>.

Satellite Broadcast:

View the satellite broadcast, *Mass Antibiotic Dispensing: Taking Care of Business*, produced by the Division of Strategic National Stockpile, Coordinating Office for Terrorism Preparedness and Emergency Response, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www2a.cdc.gov/phtn/business>.

Materials:

- A closed dispensing site workbook for planners, developed by the planners in Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas, can be downloaded at <http://www.marc.org/cr>.
 - A business outreach pamphlet created by Orange County (FL) Health Department to reach out to local businesses is available on the satellite broadcast website, <http://www2a.cdc.gov/phtn/business>.
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