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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

Exercise to Test Preparedness for Bioterrorist Attack/ Pandemic Plans

Cincinnati – Cincinnati Health Department's (CHD) Center for Public Health Preparedness will be conducting a full-scale Points of Dispensing (POD) exercise, a simulated activation of a mass medication plan that may be needed as a result of a biological terrorist attack or other public health emergency. PODS could also be used during a severe pandemic flu situation. The POD exercise will occur on July 16 from 2 to 3:30 p.m., **with a photo opportunity from 2:30 to 3 p.m.,** at Shroder High School, 5030 Duck Creek Road.

Community volunteers will serve as POD workers or patients during the exercise. The exercise will test the amount of time it takes for patients to fill out paperwork and be prescribed medication for a hypothetical anthrax attack.

Community members can contact Kristin Niemiller at 513.357.7206 or Kristin.niemiller@cincinnati-oh.gov if they are interested in volunteering for the exercise.

"The POD exercise is crucial because it helps prepare us to respond quickly if there is an anthrax attack. We can apply the principles learned during this exercise if there is a mass vaccination for the flu this fall. This process may also be applied to a smallpox attack, pandemic or radiation attack," said Ami McLandsborough, Senior Environmental/Safety Specialist.

The exercise will only enable one POD; however, in case of a public health emergency, there will be more PODs scattered throughout the city.

Cincinnati is a Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI) city. The CRI is a federally funded effort to prepare major US cities and metropolitan areas to effectively respond to a large-scale bioterrorist event by dispensing antibiotics to their entire identified population within 48 hours of the decision to do so. The POD exercise is one requirement to maintain the CRI designation.

CHD's Center for Public Health Preparedness is responsible for planning for, responding to, and mitigating public health emergencies including both natural disasters—pandemics, flooding, tornados, storms—and manmade disasters—chemical releases and terrorist attacks. It also manages the laboratory and communicable disease divisions of CHD.

The Center is responsible for overseeing and fulfilling the requirements of the Cities Readiness Initiative grant and the Public Health Emergency Preparedness grant. Both grants help local health departments prepare for public health emergencies.

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