



## INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

### Idaho Inventory Management System (IIMS): Managing Supply Management and Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) Distribution

#### SUMMARY

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Health Preparedness Program (IDHW/HPP) took an innovative approach to the traditional Receipt, Store, Stage (RSS) operations by testing a new process that increased RSS operational efficiency for the agency. After manually processing the RSS during the H1N1 pandemic, IDHW decided to exercise a new inventory management system called the Idaho Inventory Management System (IIMS). This new process exposed IDHW to an innovative method that would increase response time and decrease the margin of error when receipting, storing, and staging essential Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) supply. Having an efficient RSS process supports the capability to manage and distribute critical medical materiel needed in the event a city is faced with a potential threat that calls for pharmaceuticals, vaccines, medical supplies or other critical equipment.<sup>1</sup>

#### Strategic National Stockpile (SNS)

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) has large quantities of medicine and medical supplies to protect the American public if there is a public health emergency (terrorist attack, flu outbreak, and earthquake) severe enough to cause local supplies to run out

#### DESCRIPTION

The H1N1 pandemic challenged health departments to test the accuracy of their existing RSS methods in a real public health emergency. Although functional, health departments like Idaho Department of Health and Welfare realized that efficiency and accuracy could be improved by utilizing a barcode enabled system that electronically tracked inventory in real time.

The RSS process was developed by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Upon determination of an imminent public health threat, the CDC mobilizes the SNS and pushes emergency supplies to states. The process of states and local governments receiving the SNS is called RSS. It is not proprietary and each state is qualified to receive the SNS in the event of a public health emergency.

Successful RSS operations require the timely distribution of medical materiel to an affected population in the event of an imminent threat. Depending on the threat, it is critical to life-saving measures that medical materiel be distributed to the population quickly and with minimal error. Having a system in place to streamline and track inventory received is critical towards ensuring supplies received are adequately accounted for and accurately distributed.

In support of the SNS program mission, IDHW exercised an innovative approach that enhanced the medical supply management and distribution capability.<sup>2</sup> The IIMS exercise aimed to streamline IDHW's inventory management as well as validate new procedures for tracking the receipt, staging, and storing of medical materiel. The system keeps track of the

---

*LLIS.gov* defines Innovative Practice as successful and innovative procedures, techniques, or methods developed and/or implemented by the emergency management or response community to adapt to changing circumstances that others may wish to emulate.

inventory electronically, eliminating the traditional manual process and reducing human error through manual receipt of the RSS.

On November 15, 2011, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare conducted a two-hour Functional Exercise (FE) testing Medical Supplies Management and Distribution, RSS Warehouse Management and Distribution. The exercise involved eight players and volunteers, and one controller and evaluator.

The exercise team was assigned scanners and laptops and provided just-in-time training on how to use the system. The exercise allowed the RSS team to get hands on experience within the system. The exercise setting established a learning environment for all participants while exercising response plans, policies, and procedures.

### Exercise Objectives

- Provide "Just-In-Time" training to RSS Inventory Team
- Demonstrate consolidation of inventory and rapid chain of custody procedures
- Demonstrate the RSS team's ability to return stock into IIMS



### APPLICABILITY

Maintaining a state of readiness is a central goal in SNS preparedness planning, but planning alone is not enough. It is critical that SNS planning be built around the capacity to respond effectively and quickly to save lives, prevent disease, and protect against threats. The IIMS Exercise tested a new systematic process for IDHW that helped manage the RSS with efficiency and minimal error. The exercise demonstrated that using the barcode system sped up the picking process and allowed the inventory system to be automatically updated reducing the margin of error. IDHW has adopted the IIMS Totes method and currently has their RSS team train using the method. The exercise validated that exploring and testing new methodologies reveals enhanced methods that streamline existing processes and improves efficiency.

### CITATIONS

<sup>1</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention. "Receiving, Distributing, and Dispensing Strategic National Stockpile Assets."

[http://www.kdheks.gov/cphp/download/SNS\\_Planning\\_Guide\\_V10.02.pdf](http://www.kdheks.gov/cphp/download/SNS_Planning_Guide_V10.02.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention: Public Health Capabilities List

<http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/capabilities/capability9.pdf>

### References

Idaho Department of Health & Welfare. "[IIMS Totes and Cases AAR](#)." Dec. 12, 2011

Center for Disease Control & Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/stockpile/stockpile.htm>

Interview with Idaho Department of Public Health & Welfare Bureau of Emergency Medical Services & Preparedness

### DISCLAIMER

*Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS.gov)* is the Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency's national online network of lessons learned, best practices, and

innovative ideas for the emergency management and homeland security communities. The Web site and its contents are provided for informational purposes only, without warranty or guarantee of any kind, and do not represent the official positions of the Department of Homeland Security. For more information on *LLIS.gov*, please email [feedback@llis.dhs.gov](mailto:feedback@llis.dhs.gov) or visit [www.llis.gov](http://www.llis.gov)