

RELATED TERMS

- Patient Flow
- Throughput
- Mass Prophylaxis



Lessons Learned Information Sharing

www.LLIS.gov

PRIMARY DISCIPLINES

- Public Health
- Public Information
- Emergency Management

BEST PRACTICE

Strategic National Stockpile Distribution Planning: Dispensing to “Head of Household”

PURPOSE

Discusses the option of introducing a “head of household” protocol during Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) dispensing operations.

SUMMARY

Local SNS planners should consider the possibility of introducing a head of household protocol during SNS distribution. Allowing the “head of household” to pick up pharmaceuticals for members of an entire family can help reduce the total number of people present at dispensing sites. It also reduces the need for children and the elderly to go through dispensing site to receive pharmaceuticals.

DESCRIPTION

A head of household protocol can reduce the number of patients moving through dispensing sites, reduce the burden placed on dispensing site staff and resources, and allow a smaller number of dispensing sites to serve a large population. This will be especially important for communities where limited staff is available to operate dispensing sites.

Considerations for Introducing Head of Household Protocol

Dispensing to the head of household is only possible for oral antibiotics and other pharmaceuticals requiring little or no training to administer. If implemented, public information announcing the option should remind parents of the inappropriateness of leaving young children, and perhaps the elderly, unattended for extended periods. Public messages should recommend that only heads of household with someone able to watch children or elderly family member should exercise this option.

The Indiana State Department of Health is planning to introduce the [Head of Household Protocol](#) throughout Indiana. [Appendix G](#) of “Planning Mass Prophylaxis” provides a template form for heads of households receiving medication for family members.

The head of household option also introduces the possibility of individual who claim to be picking up drugs for their families when, in fact, they are hoarding supplies or illegitimately selling SNS pharmaceuticals. Planners may need to limit the number of doses available for pick up by any single person.

Verifying Head of Household Status

Local SNS planners will need to determine what evidence level is necessary to verify head or household status, or verify an individual if actually collecting pharmaceuticals for their family members. To verify an individual is actually the head of a household, many jurisdictions require individuals collecting pharmaceuticals for an entire family provide at

least one form of identification for each member of the family for whom they are collecting pharmaceuticals.

The **Indiana State Department of Health** requires that for a head of household to receive pharmaceuticals they must:

- Be at least 18 years old;
- Present proof of age;
- Present proof of identity (e.g. state ID card); and
- Supply a piece of mail with the household residence address and a local phone number.

Information about Household Members

In addition to proof of identity, planners must ensure that all heads of household have critical information about each person requiring pharmaceuticals when arriving at a dispensing site. Critical information includes:

- Total number of people requiring pharmaceuticals;
- Names and dates of birth of people requiring pharmaceuticals;
- Weight of household members under the age of 12 years;
- History of any medical conditions, including allergies to antibiotics for all family members; and
- Other medications currently taken by family members.

Public Information about the Head of Household Option

Local SNS planners must ensure that all households are clearly informed of these requirements through the public information efforts during an incident. This requires SNS planners to work with public information officers, government spokespersons, and their agency's webmaster to:

- Inform the public of the availability of the head of household option;
- Provide information that will be requested of heads of household while at the dispensing site; and
- Provide the location of dispensing sites where dispensing to head of household is available.

Planners may also want to consider distributing necessary forms on agency websites or through media outlets. Providing this information to the public before they arrive at dispensing sites will help to increase the throughput at the site.

Providing Information about Pharmaceuticals

Planners must ensure that patients receiving pharmaceuticals for family members are given clear information about the pharmaceuticals being dispensed, both from staff while they are at the dispensing site and leaflets to take home. This information will need to include clear directions on doses, allergic reactions, side effects, or other adverse reactions.

Planners may also wish to design the patient flow of the dispensing sites so a separate line is created for the heads of household arriving at the dispensing sites. They can then be directed to the area to receive special doses of pharmaceuticals. This can only be done if the dispensing site has sufficient room and there are available resources.

RESOURCES

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Strategic National Stockpile Preparedness Course*. 12-16 Jan 2004.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Receiving, Distributing, and Dispensing Strategic National Stockpile Assets: A Guide for Preparedness- Version 10 (Draft)*, Jun 2005.
([LLIS.gov ID# 14197](#))
- Indiana State Department of Health. *Mass Prophylaxis Planning Video Seminar. Technical Assistance for Local Health Departments*.
<http://www.in.gov/isdh/bioterrorism/workplans/mass-prophylaxis-planning.htm>.
- William K. Rashbaum and Judith Miller. "New York Police Take Broad Steps in Facing Terror." *The New York Times*. 15 Feb 2004.

DISCLAIMER

Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS.gov) is the US Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency's national online network of lessons learned, best practices, and innovative ideas for the emergency response 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 US Department of Homeland Security. For more information on *LLIS.gov*, please email Feedback@llis.dhs.gov or visit www.llis.gov.