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BEST PRACTICE

Strategic National Stockpile Distribution Planning: Dispensing Site Layout and Patient Flow

PURPOSE

Discusses the physical layout and appropriate patient flows at Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) dispensing sites.

SUMMARY

Local SNS planners should create diagrams for the physical layout and patient flow for each dispensing site. State planners may provide templates to local planners and dispensing site managers for determining their facility's layout and flow. The physical layout will map the key stations to be established at the site. The patient flow displays the sequence of stations the patients will visit.

The physical layout and patient flow are critical elements for the successful operation and maximum efficiency of SNS dispensing sites. At the same time, experience illustrates the variety of potential designs for dispensing site layout. There is no single layout that will optimize patient throughput in all facilities during all situations. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division Strategic National Stockpile's (DSNS) [Receiving, Distributing, and Dispensing Strategic National Stockpile Assets - Version 10](#), Appendix R, provides information modeling of different dispensing site layouts.

DESCRIPTION

This Best Practice reviews processes for developing physical layout and patient flows at dispensing sites. This document is designed to provide additional resources and support to state and local SNS planners. It discusses dispensing site design, dispensing tasks, and dispensing site organization.

Considerations for the Design of Dispensing Sites

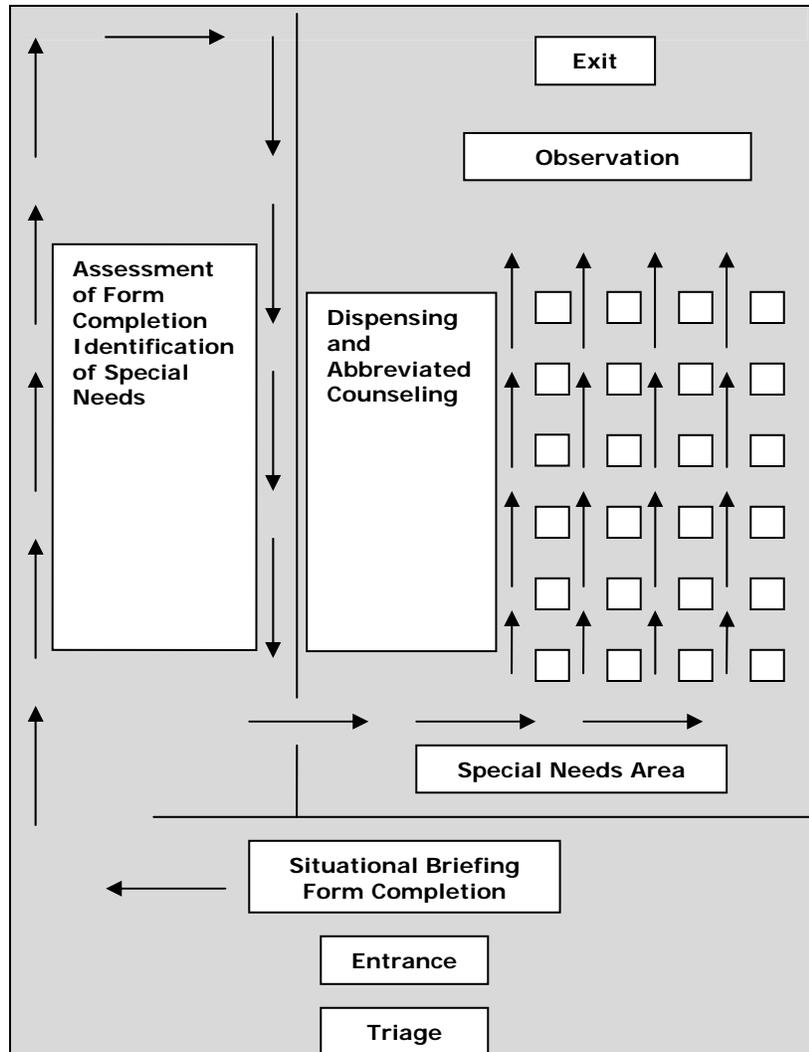
Pre-planned diagrams of the physical layout and patient flow at a dispensing site enable managers, staff, volunteers, and patients to understand the procedures and activities at the site. Templates and diagrams for the physical layout and patient flow of dispensing sites will vary depending on the estimated patient volume, size of the identified dispensing sites, and local resources available to the state. State planners should design templates so they:

During an SNS training exercise in North Carolina, a triage station was set up in the parking lot outside the allocated dispensing site. This was done to control the flow of patients into the site and prevent cross-contamination of patients in the event of a communicable disease outbreak.

The [California Department of Health Services](#), [New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](#), and [DC Department of Health](#) have published examples of their patient flows and physical layout of SNS dispensing/mass prophylaxis sites.

- Are scalable for small or large numbers of patients;
- Utilize methods for large crowd control;
- Minimize the use of staff;
- Reduce the numbers of stops to get drugs;
- Place the triage area as early as possible in the site flow process; and
- Maximize the use of available space.

Available templates should be made available to all state and local SNS planners, dispensing site managers, and operational staff at each site.



Template for Patient Flow (Large Gym/Auditorium)

Source: Wyoming Department of Health

Dispensing Tasks

Templates should include a list of ongoing tasks during operations and indicate where in the facility each task should occur. These will assist site managers and staff with the establishment of patient flow through the site and staffing requirements. One template can map the layout of the facility, with a second template mapping workflow and the movement of patients through the facility. CDC officials suggest introducing a color-coded system during operations for ease of flow and to assist patients in finding their way around a site.

The Boston Emergency Medical Services' plan for SNS distribution calls for the use of six-foot high, multicolored bicycle flagpoles to demarcate areas within dispensing sites. Multicolored adhesive feet will help guide patients to the appropriate area.

The principal tasks of dispensing operations may vary slightly among local jurisdictions. At a minimum, dispensing site templates should include the following tasks and indicate where within the physical layout of the dispensing site each task should occur:

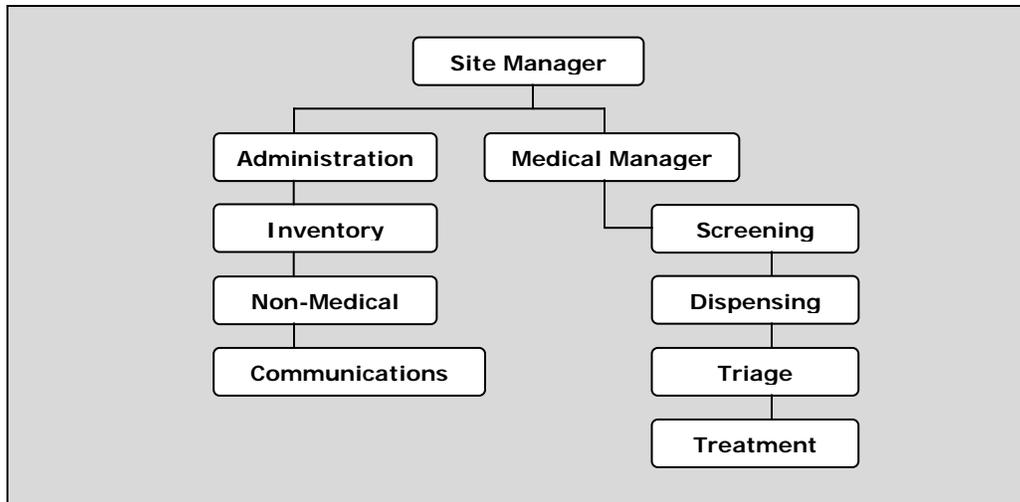
- Check In/Greeters;
- Triage/screening;
- Registration/assessment;
- Special needs patients;
- Medical treatment;
- Patient counseling;
- Mental health;
- Dispensing of pharmaceuticals;
- Pharmaceutical storage locations;
- Preparing and dispensing special dosages (preferably separate rooms); and
- Areas for dispensing to heads of household.

The [American Society of Health-System Pharmacists](#) had a number of useful presentations on the issue of designing dispensing sites at their mid-year clinical meeting during December 2002 in Atlanta. Presentation slides and summaries are available on the Society's website.

If the SNS is deployed in response to an outbreak of a communicable disease, dispensing sites should provide basic masks and guidance on how to prevent exposure while at the dispensing site. For more information on the staffing required to carry out these tasks, please see the *Lessons Learned Information Sharing Best Practice: Strategic National Stockpile Distribution Planning: Staffing Requirements of Dispensing Sites*.

Organizational Charts

Local SNS planners and dispensing site managers should include organizational diagrams of key site personnel and/or functions within a site and make them available to dispensing site staff. These diagrams will assist staff define clear lines of responsibility, management, and operations during dispensing.



Dispensing Site Organization Chart

Source: *Idaho Department of Health and Welfare*
(as provided by the CDC)

RESOURCES

American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. *Local Emergency Preparedness and Response: On the Road to Best Practices*. Georgia World Congress Center. Atlanta, Georgia. 10 Dec 2002.

Atlantic Management Center, Inc. *Smallpox Pilot Document: Demonstrating the Use of Automated Tools in a Mass Inoculation Bio-Terrorism Environment*. Oct 2003.

California Department of Health Services. *State of California Mass Prophylaxis Planning Guide*. Jun 2003.
([LLIS.gov ID# 160](#))

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Receiving, Distributing, and Dispensing the Strategic National Stockpile Assets: A Guide for Preparedness*. Version 10, Jun 2005.
([LLIS.gov ID# 14197](#))

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Strategic National Stockpile Preparedness Course*. 12-16 Jan 2004.

Wyoming Department of Health. *Strategic National Stockpile Plan*. Revised 1 Jul 2003.

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