



FEMA

Lessons Learned
Information Sharing
LLIS.gov

Sharing Information
Enhancing Preparedness
Strengthening Homeland Security

PRACTICE NOTE

Point of Dispensing Operations: Yolo County, California, Health Department's Use of Ham Radio Operators

PRACTICE

During a point of dispensing (POD) exercise at the University of California, Davis, (UCD) the Yolo County, California, Health Department utilized ham radio operators to communicate real-time patient and vaccination information from the POD to the UCD emergency operations center (EOC).

DESCRIPTION

From December 1 to 3, 2008, the Yolo County, California, Health Department participated in a two-phase full-scale exercise (FSE) with UCD. The first phase occurred on December 1 and 2 to exercise just-in-time training for POD personnel and communication between health department personnel and UCD officials. The second phase began on December 3 and consisted of a functional flu clinic hosted on the UCD campus to exercise mass prophylaxis POD plans and operations. The exercise scenario was based upon a potential novel H1N1 influenza subtype pandemic. Exercise participants included 139 players and 778 clinic patients.

During the second phase of the FSE, UCD personnel added a staff position filled by volunteer ham radio operators to keep an accurate count of patient throughput at the POD. The ham radio operators also tracked the number of intranasal FluMist and injectable vaccinations dispensed at the POD. Ham radio operators then relayed the patient and vaccination information to the UCD EOC. The addition of this staff position enabled the university's POD site to provide accurate, real-time throughput and vaccination information to the UCD EOC. In a real-world event, this information would be relayed to the county EOC, which would allow the county all-POD coordinator to have accurate tallies of patient throughput for making decisions.

The exercise after-action report (AAR) noted that communication will be important during a POD activation to track the number of vaccine and antiviral dosages administered. This information will help to determine if a POD site will need additional medication. The AAR recommended that the health department advise city of Davis EOC's of the importance of having ham radio personnel or other personnel familiar with radio communications available at POD sites. It also recommended that the health department add the patient count staff position to the job action sheets provided to every POD. The health department plans to add a similar radio position to the county's POD plan.

CITATION

Yolo County, California, Health Department. *Operation Aggie Flu After Action Report/Improvement Plan*. 15 Jan 2009.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=40800>

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.