

**Report to the University Health Council regarding the April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007  
Emergency Dispensing Site Drill and UMass Amherst' Public Health  
Emergency Preparedness, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Background:**

On April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007 a full scale functional Emergency Dispensing Site (EDS) Exercise was staged at the Mullins Center with hours of operation from 9am-12pm. This exercise was the second full scale EDS operation held at the Mullins Center, a similar drill was held April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006. The Mullins EDS operation was part of a Western Massachusetts public health regional drill that included:

- Surge capacity and force protection at University Health Services,
- A smaller scale functional EDS and opening of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at Amherst College
- A regional communications drill which included all 98 Local Boards of Health (LBOH), the 10 Western Massachusetts Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH).
- EOC's were opened at UMass Amherst and the Town of Amherst.

The scenario for the exercise was that of an outbreak of bacterial meningitis requiring mass immunization of all students, faculty, and staff at UMass. Amherst College and the Town of Amherst experienced exposures and public panic requiring rapid response measures. The scenario for the 2006 exercise was that of a pandemic flu requiring mass influenza vaccinations.

This exercise was funded in part by a grant from the Western Massachusetts Homeland Security Council. This exercise was developed, implemented, and evaluated as a HSEEP (Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program) compliant event.

**Goals of the UMass Amherst EDS Exercise:**

- To incorporate lessons learned (improvement matrix) from the 4/20/06 exercise; changed clinic flow, communications plan and training procedures.
- To utilize the staff of the UMass Amherst Medical Reserve Corps as a training opportunity.

- Junior and Senior Nursing Students (240)
  - Nursing Faculty (20)
  - Public Health Students/faculty (5)
  - ROTC Students (20)
  - EMT Students (10)
  - Retired UHS staff (3)
  - Other Volunteers (5)
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- To test vaccination throughput of the EDS (~300/hr, goal was 300/hr)
  - To develop a volunteer accountability plan (ROTC did this quite well))
  - To utilize Incident Command Structure in all EDS operations (accomplished)
  - To develop a security plan for a Mullins EDS (UMPD began this process)
  - To Conduct effective Just In Time Training for MRC volunteers (in process)
  - To test UHS' ability to rapidly screen students vaccination status ( done within 6 hours by UHS' systems analysts)
  - To educate victim volunteers about meningitis and emergency preparedness ( partially accomplished-DVD worked, power point did not)
  - To test the signage at the EDS ( evaluation results>85% positive feedback)
  - To test EDS to EOC communications ( handled by incident commander Robert Laford-worked well)
  - To utilize MRC volunteers as a resource to UHS, and Amherst College ( worked well for Amherst College, volunteers arrived too late for the shorter UHS drill to participate)
  - To test communications between the Town, UMass , and Amherst College EOC ( still gathering reports from the EOC's, some difficulty in communications between entities has been noted)

### **Exercise Highlights:**

- Initial overall evaluations from MRC volunteers, MDPH & CDC evaluators , and Victim Volunteers was very positive with the majority of evaluated objectives scoring >80% positive ratings.
- A large media turnout with radio, press and TV interviews conducted.
- Emergency preparedness educational opportunities provided for ~270 students. In depth study for 3 senior nursing students, 1 nursing PhD candidate, 1 PH student's MPH thesis was about the drill, and a PH student's independent study credit awarded.

- Regional collaboration achieved and is on going between many response partners throughout Western Massachusetts:
  - Public Health Nurse sits on the Hampshire County Public Health Coalition
  - Public Health nurse sits on the Five College emergency preparedness committee.
  - Public Health Nurse sits on the Western Massachusetts Medical Reserve Corps Advisory Group
  
- A training film is in the process of being produced from the event.
- As a result of the regional exercise many of the Hampshire County CDC Public Health Emergency Preparedness deliverables (requirements for State funding) have been met for this fiscal year.
- A repeat regional communications drill will take place on July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007 and will include UMass response partners, as well as representatives from the other 4 colleges.
- A HSEEP compliant After Action Report is in process and will be filed with the Homeland Security Council & EOPS.
- UMass Amherst is an official Emergency Dispensing Site as registered with the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS).
- Forms & signage potentially needed in an actual emergency were produced for this drill.

**Public Health Emergency Preparedness ongoing needs at UMass:**

- An integrated, funded, staffed full-time office of Emergency Preparedness (EP) in which to collaboratively plan, prepare, coordinate, and operate all Public Health preparedness activities within the larger campus EP structure.
  
- Public Health Emergency Preparedness should be part of the campus Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP).
  
- There is a need on an ongoing basis to do “all –hazards” Public Health planning (i.e. pandemic flu, hepatitis A, meningitis). For example, we need to establish isolation and

quarantine protocols, and discuss the possible need for Influenza Specialty Care Units, risk communication, and social distancing plans.

- This planning should have representation from UHS, Facilities, Housing, Auxiliary Services, Finance & Admin, OIT, Transit, EH&S, IPO, UMPD, Faculty, and Students. (not inclusive list)
  - This planning should be ongoing; once a plan is made it should be tested, evaluated and modified.
  - Public Health Emergencies would involve all response partners, and core service infrastructure not just health care providers.
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- April 12<sup>th</sup> Exercise Plan available upon request
  - April 12<sup>th</sup> After Action Report will be available by June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Becker RN, BSN  
Public Health Nurse,  
Director, UMass Amherst Medical Reserve Corps

