



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

VIRGINIA PRESSLER, MD
DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

April 18, 2016

16-026

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SEEKS VOLUNTEERS TO SIMULATE MASS DISTRIBUTION OF MEDICATIONS TO THE PUBLIC

Full-Scale Exercise to Test Disaster Response Readiness

HONOLULU — On Thursday, April 28, the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) will conduct a Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) full-scale, multi-agency exercise to practice procedures designed to allow for rapid distribution of medications to the public during a large-scale emergency or disaster.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) SNS is a national supply of medicine and medical supplies provided to supplement state and local resources during a public health emergency that is severe enough to exhaust local supplies. If the SNS is activated, state plans include procedures to open medication distribution sites called Points of Distribution (PODs) throughout the state to quickly distribute medicine to the public.

A POD exercise will be open to the public and conducted at the Neal S. Blaisdell Center on **Thursday, April 28, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon**. Volunteers ages 18 and older are invited to participate as actors in the exercise by posing as individuals or representatives of a household and simulating pick-up of medications at a POD. Lunch will be provided to registered volunteers. Free registration and more details are available at:

[HTTPS://HAWAIIISNS2016.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://hawaiiisns2016.eventbrite.com)

“This public health preparedness exercise is designed to test and improve the state’s ability to request, receive and distribute vital medical countermeasures,” explained Health Director Dr. Virginia Pressler. “The exercise is also an opportunity to build public understanding of what a

'POD' is, how it works and what people should do if we ever need to open and activate medication distribution sites during a crisis situation.”

Rapid response will be critical in health and medical situations requiring mass distribution of medication. “Ideally, we want to be able to get potentially lifesaving medicines into the hands of all of residents and visitors within a 48-hour timeframe — a tremendous undertaking,” said State Epidemiologist Dr. Sarah Park. “We’re offering this training opportunity for both the public and those charged with response duties so they may better understand and perform their respective roles when called upon.”

SNS state coordinator Terry Visperas said the exercise scenario includes a simulated activation of the SNS, including the receipt, storage, tracking, and delivery of medication to participating POD sites throughout the state. The exercise will include federal, state, and local law enforcement, emergency management, medical, security, warehouse, transportation, military, business, and other public and private sector partners.

For more information about the SNS, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/stockpile/stockpile.htm>.

#