

Push Partner POD Training

Welcome to the Push Partner Point of Dispensing Operations Class!

Your company is partnering with your local health department for Public Health Preparedness. By taking this class you will get an introduction to your company's role as a Push Partner POD to help to distribute emergency medication to protect employees and their families in the event of a life threatening emergency.

Public Health Preparedness is a program that works towards protecting the public's health in the event of a large scale communicable disease outbreak or a biological agent release in the community. This includes pre-event planning and relationship building with community partners, private industry and other agencies to ensure a comprehensive and successful response in the event a public health emergency occurs.

Lesson 1: What is a Push Partner POD?

POD = Point of Dispensing

These are specific business locations that have agreed to work with the health department to distribute emergency medications to their staff and family members in a large-scale declared public health emergency.

At a Push Partner POD employees and their family members would come to the designated business location to receive medications in the event of a widespread public health emergency, such as an aerosolized anthrax attack. Educational materials about the disease, agent, and medications would be provided by the health department.

At a Push Partner POD, the health department would be "pushing out" medications for local business partners to help distribute to their employees instead of "pulling" people to stop what they are doing to go to a local public site in the community to receive medications.

Taking the medications provided by the health department in a large scale public health emergency is voluntary. Only in a large-scale life-threatening public health emergency would the local, State, and National health departments recommend mass distribution of antibiotics to the public outside of the normal medical practice. You may still want to contact your primary care physician for further information and directions after being given emergency medications at a Push Partner POD to address any concerns.

Businesses may choose whether or not to have family members come to the business site to obtain their medications or have their staff take the medications home to their families and then return to work.

If it is not convenient for staff and their families to come to the business location they would be instructed to go to a public POD in their community.

Some businesses may even choose to open their location to the public and serve as a public Point of Dispensing. However, no business is obligated to do so.

When would we expect to distribute emergency medications at work?

Push Partner PODs would only be opened in the rare event that the whole population is at great risk of exposure to a contagious disease or other biological agent and preventative medications need to be taken immediately to prevent severe illness.

Some examples of biological agents that would trigger the opening of a Push Partner POD are:

- Aerosolized Anthrax
- Plague

The public health model that we plan for is based on an exposure to deadly agents, like Anthrax, which can rapidly lead to serious illness or death in a matter of a few days. In this situation, medication to prevent infection is most effective if given within 48 hours.

The first 12-18 hours will be spent with preparation, planning, and mobilization; in essence getting authorization and supplies ready to open. Realizing that we have less than 2 days to provide every person in Yolo County (approximately 200,000) with emergency medications and the instructions on how to take it, the health department is reaching out to large businesses, city government, and universities to help distribute emergency medications to their own employees.

This means that partnering with businesses and other groups in the community is key to successfully dispensing medications to our entire population within the given time frame.

Alert & Notification

The Health Department maintains a web based Alert and Notification system, called the California Health Alert Network (CAHAN), specifically designed to rapidly communicate with our staff and partner agencies. In the event of the need to activate our Push Partner POD plans the health department would do the following:

The Health Department Would Contact The Push Partner

Using one or all of the following

- CAHAN (automated alerting system)
- Phone Tree (to contact staff)
- Fax (for sending paperwork)

The Push Partner Needs The Capability Of Contacting Staff And Family

Using one or all of the following

- Phone
- Fax
- Other

Lesson 2: Set-up

After notifications of a major health emergency have gone out to Push Partners, your business would begin activating its Push Partner Plan, which would include setting up the area where staff and/or family members will systematically rotate through to get medications and information about the disease and the medication provided to protect them from infection.

There are FOUR main considerations to the set-up of a Push Partner POD:

Health and Safety:

In a life-threatening public health emergency the health department is expecting that the need for medical licenses to distribute antibiotics will be waived so that the non-licensed persons (i.e. business Push Partner staff) can quickly distribute emergency medications. However, precautions need to be taken to assure health and safety standards are met. This includes the general safety of co-workers and staff working in and going through the Push Partner POD as well as ensuring that our Push Partners follow any protocols given by the health department for safely distributing emergency medications.

Staff Roles:

Here are the three main roles that need to be filled to run a Push Partner POD:

Push Partner Business Coordinator: This person is an employee of your business or organization who maintains contact with the Health Department and is responsible for the overall Push Partner effort in your organization.

Distribution/Screening: This person will review the medication screening form and distribute medications to staff and their families. This role may be split into two roles with one person reviewing the screening form and the other person distributing the medication bottle/packet. Multiple people can work to review the screening form and to assist with distributing the medications, with a Lead in charge of the station, in order to speed up the process.

Inventory Tracking: This person documents all medications and staff members who have received their medications. This information will be turned over to the health department when everyone at the Push Partner POD has received their medications.

Security:

It is important to have security (whether you have security staff or an alarm or key card system) at your Push Partner site to ensure order and safety. This will also prevent the public from coming to your site. If your business has decided to be a public POD, security can help with crowd and damage control at your Push Partner POD.

Location and Layout:

This is the venue within your business site where staff and family members will come to receive their medications. This should be a relatively open space. Ideally this location will have specific in and out doors but modifications can be made to the Push Partner POD lay out to accommodate your venue.

Non-Medical Models for Rapid Distribution of Emergency Medications

What characterizes this method of distribution?

- It Relies on employees to self-screen
- The emergency medications will be free for all
- For those with serious medical conditions, employees can take emergency medications home and consult with their primary care provider

A Push Partner POD will only be implemented in emergency situations at non-medical business sites for the primary purpose of distributing life-saving medications as rapidly as possible. This means that employees will be given simplified medication information forms to identify if they can safely take the medications offered.

Medications used in a life-threatening emergency requiring mass distribution to protect the whole population will need to be both safe and effective for all age groups with minimal exceptions.

Employees will “self-screen” to determine which medication, if there are more than one available, is the best treatment to take. Non-medical staff will be briefed to assist employees with their self-screening process.

Employees or family members with serious medical conditions that may interfere with taking the emergency medication will be referred to their primary care provider.

Remember that the health department will provide the medication free of charge at your site but taking the medications is voluntary.

Things to keep in mind when running your Push Partner POD include:

- Keeping supplies in a safe area where inventory staff can easily track what is coming in and going out.
- Managing crowd control.
- Ensuring your staff and family members are able to quickly and safely go through the Push Partner POD.

Layout & Set-up

Considerations for your facility:

- Delivery area
 - Supplies
- Staff and Family
 - Parking areas
 - Workplace areas
- Traffic Control
- Crowd control

As soon as your business knows that they are going to activate their Push Partner Plan, a delivery area should be secured. This is the area or location where the medications will be delivered. Medications will arrive in one of two ways: the health department liaison will deliver the medications or a representative from your company will pick up the medications at a designated site and then return with the medication to your business. Either way, a safe and secure area needs to be ready for medication delivery and unpacking. This may have been done by your company ahead of time using the Push Partner Plan template provided by the health department.

When activating a Push Partner POD your business needs to consider where staff and family members are going to park their cars. Some businesses have a secured parking area that can only be accessed with codes or a key card. Your agency may need to create a parking plan that will allow for staff and family members to safely and securely enter the facility in an orderly fashion.

Traffic control will also be a consideration when activating a Push Partner POD. Again, your business can work with the health department to create a map and a plan for moving cars through an area so that your staff and family members can safely arrive, receive their medications and depart in a timely and organized manner.

All of these plans may have been put together by your company ahead of time using the Push Partner Plan template provided by the health department.

Materials Provided

Your company has already received materials about how to set up and run a Push Partner POD. This will allow your company to have almost everything in place ahead of time in preparation for activating a Push Partner POD if that ever needs to occur.

In addition to the medications, the health department will provide your business with the following materials upon activation of your Push Partner POD:

- **FAQ's** - The Frequently Asked Questions can come in multiple languages to suit the needs of your business.
- **Medications being distributed** - the health department will include any information about the medications that will be provided at the Push Partner POD. This information is generated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or by the drug manufacturer.
- **Signs and symptoms about the agent or disease** - the health department will include any information regarding the signs and symptoms of the agent or disease being treated at the Push Partner POD. This information is generated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- **Where to get additional medication** - The health department will work with Federal, State, and Local officials to determine if additional medication is needed to be taken over a longer period of time and how to obtain additional medications.
- **Screening forms** - These forms will allow you and/or your family members to answer questions that will ensure the medication is safe for you and all of your family members. For some rare conditions, an alternate medication may be safer.
- **Unit-measured medication packages** - the medication that is delivered to your company will already be in pre-measured units or individual containers.

Training & Identification

Always Remember To:

- Listen closely in your Just-In-Time Training or any other announcements as you may need to train others.
- If you have a role in the Push Partner POD, remember to wear your role identification badge so that you are easily identifiable (e.g. screener, dispenser, etc).

When the Push Partner POD is activated your company's Push Partner Business Coordinator, with assistance from Health Department staff, will be conducting what is called "Just-In-Time" training. During this training the coordinator will be going over what is expected of those who will have roles in the Push Partner POD as well as what has already been outlined in the Push Partner Plan.

Just-In-Time training is a simplified step-by-step process for safely distributing medication while managing medication inventories and the challenge of crowd control. The training will also cover communication and security protocols and a review of required paperwork.

Some companies may choose to have staff members who have a role in the Push Partner POD wear a role identification badge (e.g. screener, dispenser, etc) so that each station and the staff members are easily identifiable as employees and their families rotate through the Push Partner POD.

Personnel

The following roles will need to be filled during a Push Partner POD. Ideally your company can pre-select these individuals and their back-ups so we can provide pre-event training onsite to ensure the POD runs smoothly during an actual event.

- Push Partner Business Coordinator
- Medication Distribution
- Self-Screening Assistant
- Inventory Tracking
- Security
- Line Control
- Other

Push Partner POD Organizational Chart

During an emergency the health department and its partners will be working under the Incident Command System (ICS). This is a system that allows for efficient lines of communication and task delegation for emergency response. When thinking of how your Push Partner POD will be running you can compare it to a ship.

ICS uses a Command structure just like the California Fire Service. This structure starts with the Push Partner Business Coordinator, an employee at your facility who will oversee the POD operations. A Health Department “Push Partner Liaison” may be available onsite at the opening of the POD and will be available through a dedicated phone number if questions arise.

Under ICS everyone working in the Push Partner POD will be assigned a supervisor to whom they can ask questions or seek help.

The most important thing for you to remember when functioning within the Incident Command System during an emergency response, in addition to who you report to, is that if anything out of the ordinary should happen you will need to document it along with the time, what happened, and what actions were taken. This ensures there are accurate records of what happened at your location and if reimbursement is needed there are details regarding the incident.

Push Partner Business Coordinator

The Push Partner Business Coordinator is the employee at your facility who is in charge of the Push Partner POD. All of the other roles report to your Push Partner Business Coordinator during POD activities. The Push Partner Business Coordinator is:

- The key contact person with local health department who communicates directly with the Health Department Push Partner Liaison.
- Coordinates the overall Push Partner effort at your organization.
- Oversees initial delivery of medications and all preparations needed to set up and conduct a medication distribution operation on-site. Oversees any report back to local health department and return of leftover antibiotics to your local health department.
- Makes sure your staff have what they need to do their jobs.

Section 3: The Process

Check-In

As staff and family members arrive at the Push Partner POD they will form a line at the Check-In Station. This is where they will sign-in to ensure that all staff at the site receive their medications.

Check-In staff will hand out information about the event, provided by the health department, and the appropriate number of screening forms needed for each employee and their family members.

Employees will be given directions about where to go next and what will be happening when they go through the Push Partner POD.

Form Fill-Out

This is the next area that you will go to in the Push Partner POD. Staff will have the opportunity to fill out their screening forms before they go to the Screening station. Your company may choose to have staff assist with filling out the forms in this area and answer any questions your employees may have about the forms or the Push Partner process. A list of Frequently Asked Questions will be provided to your company by the health department to help with filling out forms.

Self-Screening Assistant

The Self-Screening Assistant helps co-workers complete their screening form and questions for themselves and each of their family members. This person may assist employees to carefully answer questions that may identify health conditions that would interfere with taking one or more of the emergency medications, using pre-set guidance provided by CDC and the health department.

If there is more than one medication available, the medication that was deemed safest and most effective by the CDC will be the first choice medication to be given.

Medication Distribution

Medication screening guidelines developed by the health department and CDC will be given to all employees and family members to help them identify if there are any unusual or severe health conditions that may interfere with taking the emergency medications.

After reviewing the medication screening form carefully to ensure that employees answered "NO" to any barriers to taking the emergency medications, the medication distributor will hand out the medication.

Along with the medication, all employees will receive the Frequently Asked Questions about the medication and the disease/agent.

This role of Medication Distribution will likely not be filled by medical personnel as it is expected that in a large-scale emergency waivers of medical licensing and practices may be partially suspended allowing recipients to self screen for medication.

Inventory Tracker

This person communicates with the Push Partner Coordinator, the Dispenser, and the Screener throughout the entire Push Partner POD process to:

- Ensures that all medications are accounted for
- Inventories are conducted:
 - When the medications are delivered
 - During POD operations
 - At the end of emergency dispensing
- Reports to Push Partner Coordinator if supplies/meds are running low
- Keeps documentation of medications
- Prepares leftover medications for return to your local health department

Section 4: Other Considerations

Security

Security is a key aspect of the Push Partner POD. Good security ensures that staff and family members are safe and that your facility is also protected.

Interior Security –

Assists with crowd control and protecting access to medication storage and/or other areas that are off-limits to visitors or family. Assists Push Partner POD staff with disruptions, conflicts, or other problems that may arise.

Traffic Control/Exterior Security –

Directs cars in the parking area and ensures there is a secure area for the Health Department to drop off the medications. Also ensures that only staff and family members are entering the facility.

Handling Staff Crises

- Make sure that staff showing signs of fatigue are relieved
- Check in with staff and family members
- Keep in regular contact with the Push Partner Liaison at the Health Department

Emergencies are stressful for everyone involved. When a staff member becomes tired they will start to make mistakes. A mistake (no matter how small) could equate to a huge mistake when distributing emergency medications! Relieve them immediately!

Stressful situations can exacerbate small personality conflicts that would usually be ignored. If you see this happening in a specific section, re-assign staff. If the problem persists let the Push Partner Business Coordinator know so that they can ask for a replacement staff member.

Last but not least, if something is not functioning at the Push Partner POD the way it is supposed to change it or ask the Push Partner Coordinator to change it. To keep things as low stress and running as smoothly as possible, everyone with a role in the Push Partner POD should be ready to adapt to any situation. In instances when a change is necessary it is important to confer with the rest of the Push Partner POD Staff on the appropriate course of action.

Closing

The Health Department maintains contact with all of it's Push Partner PODs. When all of the employees and/or their family members have gone through the Push Partner POD your company will then start breaking down the Push Partner POD. All unused medications, supplies, and all paperwork will need to be returned to the Health Department so that supplies and medicines can be redistributed to other locations that are in need. This process is outlined in the Push Partner Plan template given to your company ahead of time by the health department.

Once the facility is cleared and cleaned, all staff will meet in one area and everyone will be given a chance to voice what they thought worked well and what didn't. This is called a debrief. Please make sure to participate in the debrief so that the Health Department knows how to make the Push Partner POD function more smoothly in the future. Please be sure to listen for any other public service announcements from the health department or messages from your company regarding the emergency. You may get additional information about your medications or the disease or agent.

If you had a role in the Push Partner POD, make sure to sign out before you leave to go home or back to your regular duties. The Health Department is responsible for you while you are working in a POD so always remember to sign in upon arrival to the Push Partner POD and sign out upon your departure from the Push Partner POD.

