



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Vermont Receives High Scores for Public Health Preparedness

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Media Contact: Communication Office
Vermont Department of Health
802-863-7281

BURLINGTON – The Vermont Department of Health received a score of 97 out of 100 from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for its level of preparedness to receive and dispense medications and supplies through the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) program.

Vermont also received a score of 98 out of 100 for its Cities Readiness Initiative, the most recent CDC technical assistance review that occurred in mid-February.

The scores measured the Health Department's ability to plan, exercise and activate its emergency response plan. The SNS program is a multi-agency coordinated response designed to quickly distribute medications, antidotes or vaccine to protect the state's population in the event of the release of a biological pathogen, chemical agent, or an infectious disease pandemic such as novel H1N1 flu.

The CRI score specifically measures the ability of Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle Counties to deliver medicines and medical supplies during a public health emergency such as a bioterrorism attack.

"The scores are useful indicators and show we are on track to respond to an emergency that would require the release of the SNS assets," said Dan Manz, operations and logistics administrator for the Office of Public Health Preparedness and EMS. "We work closely with public health officials statewide and our emergency response partners. We consistently refine our plan and build upon our resources."

The SNS is a federal asset that augments local medication supplies with a large, continuous quantity of medications. State health officials can access and distribute a portion of the national cache of life-saving pharmaceuticals, antidotes, vaccines, medical supplies and equipment maintained in the stockpile.

Disease surveillance and investigation to detect unusual patterns of illness, laboratory capacity to test and confirm clinical specimens for biological agents, the rapid exchange of information among health professionals and the delivery of timely, accurate and credible information to the public are among the critical elements of Vermont's response.

"An effective response will involve multiple state agencies and the entire Vermont healthcare community," Manz said.

Key response partners include all 14 Vermont hospitals, the Vermont National Guard, Vermont Emergency Management, Vermont 211 and the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems.

For more information on the Strategic National Stockpile program go to the CDC's website:
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/stockpile/>.

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Vermont Department of Health | 108 Cherry Street | Burlington, VT 05402
Voice: 802-863-7200 | In Vermont 800-464-4343 | Fax: 802-865-7754 | TTY/TDD: Dial 711 first
Health Care Provider Infectious Disease Reporting: 802-863-7240 or 800-640-4374
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