

# ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT HOLDS TRIAL POINT-OF-DISPENSING DRILL (POD)

*Drill for Distribution of Medication In the Event a Biological Attack*

On September 1st, 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm (MVCC Jorgensen Athletic Center) the Oneida County Health Department will be conducting a trial Point of Dispensing Exercise to test the Health Department's effectiveness in responding to a biological attack. It is a 1.5 hour real-time drill administered by Oneida County Health Department in cooperation with the Oneida County Executive's Office, Oneida County Office of Emergency Management, and Mohawk Valley Community College. *"This drill reminds us of the importance of preparing in advance for man-made or natural hazards that could occur in any community"* said Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. He added, *"These exercises help us to test and improve our effectiveness in getting life-saving medication to the public in real public health emergencies."*

Community members that registered to participate take on the role of members of the affected population during the drill. These "patients" simulate individuals that would potentially arrive at a POD (point-of-dispensing) site to receive lifesaving medication for their household. Each participant receives a packet representing a fictitious household; the information is scanned and the appropriate pretend medication is dispensed for their fictitious family.

*"In real public health emergencies",* said Phyllis Ellis, Director of Health, *"PODs would assist in keeping individuals with no symptoms, but requiring medication, away from hospitals to reserve critical resources for the severely ill".* To avoid unnecessary delays in dispensing potentially lifesaving medications quickly, health officials would recommend that one representative of each household come to the POD site to pick up an initial supply of medication for their entire household. The community would be encouraged to register and answer screening questions about each member of their household in advance so that medication could be quickly dispensed at the POD site.

The Health Department would like to process at least 200 people per hour. They will also evaluate their effectiveness in dispensing appropriate medication and basic information to individuals of varying ages, cultures, and conditions.

All those participating as "patients" in the POD Exercise receive at least \$10 in coupons for the on-site farmer's market or the Oneida County Public Market.

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**"PROMOTING AND PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF ONEIDA COUNTY"**