



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

## **Public Health and Parkland College To Stage Emergency Response Exercise**

**Event Will Simulate Emergency Medicine Dispensing Site;  
Other County Health Departments Will Participate**

On Thursday, September 22, the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District, the Champaign County Public Health Department and Parkland College will stage an exercise designed to simulate an emergency medicine dispensing site. The event is part of a state-wide effort to plan and prepare for terrorist attacks or other public health disasters.

Nearly 100 staff members of the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District will participate in the two-hour drill, along with staff from several other central Illinois health departments, the Champaign County Emergency Management Agency, the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency. Observers from Carle Foundation Hospital, local employees of the U.S. Postal Service and the University of Illinois will also attend.

No appointments have been scheduled at Health District offices on Thursday morning and all Public Health clinics will be closed during the drill.

The exercise is meant to prepare Public Health staff for any event that requires the distribution of medicine to large numbers of people. In such an event, health district employees would work with the county Emergency Management Agency to set up and staff one or more Medical Dispensing Sites. Thursday's exercise will involve the distribution of antibiotics following the theoretical contamination of a local post office with anthrax.

Students from Parkland College will participate in the exercise, acting as local citizens coming to the dispensing site for medications. Public Health nurses will screen those arriving at the dispensing site for symptoms, medical complications or other factors that may influence their treatment options. The participants will complete consent forms and medical assessments and will be given (mock) antibiotics in pill form.

This event is meant to help Public Health staff train for any emergency that warrants the distribution of medications to large numbers of people in the community. It is the first such exercise for Public Health, and is expected to be a learning experience.

The formal exercise will run from 9 to 11 a.m. Media are asked to arrive no earlier 10:30 a.m. If you are with the media, please ask for Diana Yates. The event will be held at the Parkland College gymnasium.

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