



EMSH *Insider*

SPECIAL EDITION

EMSH Holds Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) Exercise



Dictionary.com defines an emergency as a sudden, urgent, usually unexpected occurrence or occasion requiring immediate action. Preparing for such an occurrence helps to alleviate potential tragic endings, which is the reason for East MS State Hospital's periodic emergency exercises. Ted Spencer (Risk Management) and his team worked tirelessly to conduct a mock Anthrax attack in an effort to educate and prepare employees in case of a real-life event.



EMSH locked down its four campuses and activated its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) Wednesday, April 1, 2015 for a training exercise. The exercise tested the hospital's medical response and ability to dispense medicine if such an attack should ever occur in the area.



"This is the first time anyone has attempted to put on an exercise on such a large scale," said Ted Spencer. "We had triage locations on our main campus, the Nursing Homes, the Adolescent Unit and the group homes in Kemper County. "Emergency preparedness is a requirement for our Joint Commission Accreditation. We have been planning this exercise for two months and our staff really showed how well they could implement the plan. We learned a lot from the exercise and had some really good feedback from the Department of Health, which will help to plan better for the future."



In the scenario, the hospital received medicine from the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) to dispense to its residents, staff and family members of staff. The exercise started around 9 a.m. as the hospital's Incident Command Center gathered and the decision was made to implement the EOP.



This was a joint exercise with the Mississippi Department of Health (MSDH). MSDH representatives were on campus to monitor the sites and provide feedback. The "medicine" arrived on campus around 10 a.m. and was sent to the triage locations. Staff was administered medication until 11:45 a.m. when the exercise was concluded.

In a real life situation, the governor or his representative would have to declare a state of emergency. "The goal would be to get the medicine to the people within a 24 hour period", said Donna Dreiling, coordinator of the Department of Health's counter measures office. "It would take 12 hours for us to get the medicine, and 12 hours to package the medicine and distribute it," Dreiling said. "That's our goal."

SNS Exercise Cont.



Mississippi is the only state that has ever requested, received and dispensed medicine from the SNS, which happened after Hurricane Katrina. EMTS staff encountered problems throughout the exercise and dealt with them just like they would in real life situations. For example, one triage site reported running low on medicine so additional medicine was delivered. Nurses were sent to different sites as needed as well. As staff came in, they filled out a screening form, had it reviewed by a Registered Nurse and had any questions that arose answered. After lunch, participants gathered and gave reports.

"This was a good learning exercise for East Mississippi State Hospital and for us," said Julia Woods, pharmacist for the office of emergency preparedness and response of the Department of Health. "Everyone does training, but it is different when you are actually doing an exercise. You have to deal with the unknown. We all learned a lot today."

As we look back on past unexpected events such as 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, we should remember that anything can happen and there is no such thing as being "too prepared". Mock exercises such as this only helps us to plan and know how best to improve in case of a real world event. Employees and their families can expect to be cared for and our residents and IRS would be better served as a result.

Pictured on first and second pages are the Anthrax Drill Team Members "caught in action".



May 10th-16th is National Hospital Appreciation Week!

National Hospital Week celebrates hospitals and the men and women who support the health of their communities through dedication and compassionate care. As a token of appreciation, Regions Bank is providing EMTS employees refreshments and giveaways Wednesday, May 13th from 2:30-3:30 p.m. in Central Park.

