



Audrey Arona, M.D., District Health Director  
Gwinnett, Newton and Rockdale County Health Departments

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Dear Future Closed POD Partner:

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Closed Point of Distribution (POD) Partner. The Closed POD program is an integral component of the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) program. The Strategic National Stockpile is a federally funded program designed to prevent the mass casualty effect of certain biological agents by rapidly distributing antibiotics to all residents believed to be in an affected area within a 48-hour period, or to administer vaccine for pandemic outbreaks.

Federal, state and local public health officials have dedicated a number of resources to plan for emergency response scenarios, but in order for us to truly succeed we need both governmental and private sector involvement. Your organization's commitment is critical to public health preparedness in our local community.

As a Closed POD Partner, your organization will be asked to distribute antibiotics or administer vaccine to all employees, patients, students, or parishioners you serve. The Health Department will assist you during every step of the POD planning and preparation process.

Your commitment to preparedness signifies your commitment to our community and to saving lives. If you have any questions about this information, or would like to pursue this partnership with public health, please feel free to contact me at 678-442-6917.

Kind regards,

Gerald D. Gifford, EMHP, GA-CEM  
Deputy Director of Emergency Preparedness &  
Medical Countermeasures Coordinator  
Office of Emergency Preparedness & Response

## SUMMARY

The mission of the Closed Point of Distribution program is to save lives in the event of a public health emergency by rapidly distributing medication or vaccine to local communities. In order to do this, local public health planners form partnerships with businesses and community groups through Closed POD agreements. These groups include faith-based organizations, businesses, schools, health and medical centers, and government agencies. Closed PODs are not open to the general public, but serve specific populations.

Becoming a Closed POD Partner in your community benefits everyone involved. Businesses and organizations are able to protect their employees and their employees' families during a public health emergency. This demonstrates their strong commitment to the community. It is equally beneficial to the Health Department because it allows us to effectively use our limited resources in the event of a public health emergency.

The Health Department is committed to ensuring our partners are ready and able to act in case of an emergency. When your organization decides to become a Closed POD Partner, we will provide the planning resources and tools you need to successfully design and operate your Closed POD site.



## IT'S ALL IN THE PLANNING...

### Before an emergency

- Organization decides to become a Closed POD Partner
- Organization develop their Closed POD plan
- Organization practices their plan

### During an emergency

- Closed POD Partners are activated
- Organization collects medications or vaccine from the Health Department
- Organization distributes medication or vaccine to its employees and members according to their POD plan

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is the purpose of a Closed POD?**

A Closed POD provides life-saving medications or vaccine to an organization's employees and their family members during a public health emergency.

### **How much does it cost?**

Medications, vaccine, and planning resources are free of charge.

### **When would organizations be asked to distribute medications or vaccine at their own facility?**

The only time the health department would ask organizations to distribute medications or administer vaccine to employees and their families would be if there is a great health risk to the population and preventive medications need to be taken quickly.

### **Who is eligible to be a partner?**

All healthcare facilities, faith-based organizations, businesses, community organizations, and government agencies are eligible to participate.

### **Will people be allowed to pick up oral medications for their families?**

Yes, employees will be allowed to pick up oral medications for all family members.

### **Who needs to take the medication or receive a vaccine?**

During a health emergency, everyone within our community will need to take medication or receive a vaccine, including adults and children. Appropriate drug dosage instructions and vaccine administration instructions will be provided. Taking medication or receiving a vaccine is completely voluntary and will be the decision of each person.

### **What about employees who telework or commute long distances to and from work?**

As a Closed POD, you should expect to provide medications or vaccine to all employees and their families, realizing that commuters may choose to go to an Open/Public POD closer to their home.

### **Is it possible that our organization will need to operate a Closed POD after hours?**

Public health emergencies can occur at any time. It is essential that your organization is prepared to operate a Closed POD during non-working hours.

### **What about liability issues?**

Public health officials depend on volunteers to assist during public health emergencies. Participating as a Closed POD Partner is voluntary and there are laws to ensure your liability protection.



## HOW THE CLOSED POD PLANNING PROCESS WORKS

During the Closed POD planning process your organization will:

- Designate staff members to receive emergency communications from the Health Department
- Determine who from your organization will be responsible for retrieving medications or vaccines from the Health Department
- Determine how to activate your Closed POD team and notify staff members during a public health emergency
- Identify an effective distribution location within your facility
- Develop a distribution plan unique to your organization and the people you serve

With your distribution plan in place, you will then be able to develop a Closed POD training program for your staff members.

