

Chapter 2

Developing a

Closed POD Plan

Now that you have a basic understanding of Point Of Dispensing operations, it is time to develop your **Closed POD** plan. Your organization is most likely already engaged in continuity planning to ensure it is prepared for disruptive events. It is likely you will have to activate various aspects of your continuity plan at the same time you establish your **Closed POD**. The following information will provide key planning considerations to develop actionable items to help you with this process. These action items can be used by you to refine your efforts outlined in the **Closed POD** Planning Template found in Appendix B.

Protect Your Assets — Prepare Your Support Staff. – Identify employees or members within your organization who will assist with the planning and preparation process and involve them early.

- 1) **Appoint a planning committee** – Consider including human resource personnel, continuity managers, medical advisors, logistics specialists, security staff and your local public health liaison.
- 2) **Determine your dispensing population** – It is assumed that you will accommodate enrollees' families in your preparedness effort, and identify beforehand how you will define household, dependents or family. Then determine how many total enrollees and family members will be served so that you'll be able to estimate the amount of medication needed at the time of a public health emergency. In some instances and depending on the type of organization, you may want to include contractors or clients in your dispensing population. The decision is yours.



Organize Your Staff

- 1) **Determine Organizational Structure** – The government uses the Incident Command System (ICS) to organize and manage its all-hazards response operations. ICS has also been adapted by many private sector organizations. ICS divides an emergency response into five manageable general staff functions which will all play an important role in your **Closed POD** operations:



- Command
- Operations
- Planning
- Logistics
- Finance/Administration

The command staff functions of safety, public information and liaison may also be incorporated in the structure. See Chapters 4, 5 and 6 for more information on developing an ICS structure for your **Closed POD**.

Determine Staffing Needs – As you develop your staffing plan for the **Closed POD** based on your organizational structure, consider the following:

- 1) **Determine security needs and capabilities** - Consider your current security resources and capabilities to determine if additional security will be needed in an emergency to protect your facility and staff. Enrollees attending the **Closed POD** will need to feel safe to do so.
- 2) **Closed POD Operations Staff** – The number of staff volunteers needed to staff your **Closed POD** will be determined by a variety of factors such as the number of enrollees, your desired throughput and the design of your **Closed POD** floor plan. As a **Closed POD** you have the advantage of coordinating some functions prior to an emergency. For example, if you disseminate the enrollee information forms on line for your enrollees to download and complete prior to arriving at the **Closed POD**, you will reduce the need to have as many staff to cover registration. If you provide an intense education campaign about your involvement with public health and ensure your enrollees understand that if they are sick, they should report to a hospital or treatment facility and not come to the **Closed POD**, you will decrease the number of staff needed to conduct the triage/greigage function. Check Chapter 5 for a modeling tool from the CDC to assist with efficient POD design and staffing.
- 3) **Recruiting Staff** – Mass dispensing operations rely heavily on volunteers. It is important that you solicit volunteers within your organization to help staff your **Closed POD**. The St. Louis County Department of Health will not be able to augment your staff with the necessary medical professionals to be on site (at least one person licensed to dispense medicine is required by Missouri law), but will look to your

organization to meet the necessary staffing requirements to support your throughput goals.

Prepare Your Facility - Preparing your facility ahead of time is essential.

1) **Identify a dispensing location** - In order to dispense medications to a large number of people in a relatively short time, you will need to identify ahead of time a particular location (primary and alternate are recommended) that is capable of certain accommodations. This area should be fairly large and open, preferably a large meeting room or cafeteria. Some key factors to consider include:



- Existence of a separate entrance and exit
- Venue that is easily identifiable by all employees
- Place to secure medications and supplies
- Accommodations for people with disabilities
- Room for tables, chairs and large numbers of people
- Ability to move people through the POD in only one direction to avoid confusion and crossovers

2) **Identify/purchase/store necessary supplies** - The St. Louis County Department of Health is prepared to obtain certain supplies for your use in advance and provide them to you either in advance or when your Closed POD is activated. However, a few other routine supplies will need to be obtained by you. See Chapter 9 for a listing of those supplies that will be supplied by the County, and those items that you will need to supply for your Closed POD. The St. Louis County DOH expects to provide selected Closed PODs with more than 1,000 enrollees with a “POD in a Box” storage cabinet on wheels that will contain the supplies you will need for your Closed POD. This cabinet will be provided to you in advance and you will be expected to securely store it at your facility in advance of activation. This greatly streamlines your activation process, and assures you will be prepared to open and efficiently operate your Closed POD.

Develop Your Procedures - Your planning committee should develop procedures directly related to **Closed POD** operations, in collaboration with the DOH. A template for your plan is provided in Appendix B of this workbook.

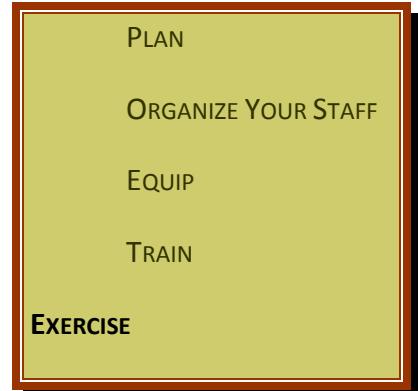
- 1) **Determine** procedures specifically related to the activation, set-up, operation and deactivation of the dispensing site.
- 2) **Determine** how medications will be received – The St. Louis County Department of Health plans to make two deliveries to your site. The first will contain sufficient medications for your Closed POD staff and their families. The second delivery will be medications for your enrollees and their families. It is important that you assure the DOH has correct and complete instructions as to precisely where the supplies and medications should be delivered and the names and contact information of the Closed POD managers. Identify individuals authorized to accept and sign for delivery and provide that information to the DOH. Security personnel should be on-hand at all times when the medications are on the premises. Providing such security is your responsibility. Plan for material handling equipment (MHE) to assist with downloading and moving medication into your facility. Additionally, your public health liaison will provide training on how to track the inventory you receive and dispense.
- 3) It is likely that there will be some medications left over after all of your enrollees have attended the **Closed POD**. Procedures should be developed to account for how medication will be counted and stored after the disaster has passed. Arrangements will be made by St. Louis County DOH to have excess capacity picked up by a courier.
- 4) Include procedures for handling small/typical emergencies that could potentially happen during the dispensing process. Consider and plan for:
 - Minor medical emergencies – Call 9-1-1? Handle on-site?
 - Security breach – Call police? Handle on-site?

Provide education/information/training – Provide your enrollees with as much information about dispensing site operations as possible. Much of this can be done pre-event. A well trained staff will become essential to ensure your designated population receives medication in a timely manner; thereby, promoting continuity of operations for your organization and meeting public health's dispensing time goal.

- 1) The St. Louis County Department of Health and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services have provided and will continue to provide educational training for organizations hosting Closed PODs. This training is offered periodically and is free to representatives from each Closed POD.
- 2) Several other educational and training resources are currently available for POD operations. These include free online training at:
 - FEMA's Emergency Management Institute <http://training.fema.gov/IS/>
IS-100.a: Introduction to the Incident Command System I-100
 - **IS-200: ICS for Single Resource and Initial Action Incidents**
 - **IS-700: National Incident Management System (NIMS), an Introduction**
 - Saint Louis University Heartland Centers <http://www.heartlandcenters.slu.edu/>
 - CDC's Mass Antibiotic Dispensing Series - **Taking Care of Business** –
<http://www2.cdc.gov/PHTN/webcast/business/index.asp>
 - National Association of City and County Health Organizations (NACCHO)
<http://closedpodpartners.org>
 - Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Strategic National Stockpile
<http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/sns/index.php>



Exercise Your Plan - Exercising plans helps to identify any problems that can be rectified before an emergency occurs. Consider conducting such exercises jointly with the DOH to further strengthen your collaboration. We recommend conducting annual internal training for your **Closed POD** staff, specifically addressing the following four key areas:



- 1) POD activation. This will *ensure that your management staff knows how to activate your Closed POD and that you can contact all of the volunteers who are listed in your plan.*
- 2) Medication receipt and dispensing procedures. This will be required for Closed POD staff whose responsibility it is to dispense the medications, and who are registered with the state. This training will be offered by St. Louis County DOH or the State of Missouri.
- 3) Full POD Exercise. This is a mock exercise of the Closed POD, complete with volunteers in the role of patients. We recommend that this be performed annually, but that is up to each individual POD to manage. The St. Louis County Department of Health plans to coordinate annual events for you and your volunteers to participate in Closed POD exercises that are held by other employers in the area.
- 4) Notification Exercise. Your Closed POD will be part of the St. Louis County E-Sponder emergency notification system, which will be periodically tested for accuracy and effectiveness. Your emergency contacts will be queried on a regular basis to confirm that all telephone numbers and email addresses are current and accurate.