



Closed Point of Dispensing (POD)

Frequently Asked Questions

In the event of a public health emergency, a large portion of the population may need to receive medication or medical supplies quickly. Some types of incidents, such as bioterrorism, may require that a 100% of the population receives medication within a thirty-six-hour period. Local Public Health agencies work together with the State to plan for and respond to Public Health Emergencies.

Medication and medical supplies are distributed at points of dispensing site which can be open or closed.

- **An Open Point of Dispensing (POD)** will be the main mechanism for dispensing medications to most of the population. An Open POD is open to the general public and operated by Local Public Health agencies.
- **A Closed Point of Dispensing (POD) Site** is a location that is operated by a private organization for a target group which may include employees and their families and/or clients/members they serve. Closed PODs are not open to the public. Closed PODs will play a very important role in a public health emergency that requires getting medications to the entire population quickly.

What are the benefits of becoming a Closed POD?

Becoming a Closed POD is beneficial to the organization as well as the community. Closed PODs help minimize the impact of an emergency on the community and can help save lives. As a Closed POD, organizations have the option to receive and dispense medications directly to employees and their families, along with other specified populations. Becoming a Closed POD displays a commitment to employees' health and safety. Closed Points of Dispensing can ensure that vulnerable clients that are served within an organization receive access to the needed supplies in an emergency. As a result, all available resources will be used more efficiently.

Ultimately, the need to serve the community during a public health emergency will require many resources. Partnering with the Local Public Health to become a Closed POD is an important way to make a difference for your employees and their families.

Who is eligible to be a Closed POD?

Businesses, Nonprofits (Community Based, Faith based etc.), Governmental, Correctional, Educational (Universities, Colleges, High Schools, etc.), Health Care (Hospitals, Clinics, Nursing Homes, Long-Term Care, Assisted-Living, Dialysis) and Religious Organizations.

What is Public Health's Role in helping organizations become a Closed POD?

Local Public Health will designate staff to assist the organization in the planning and development process. This will include assisting in the development of Closed POD Plan through providing templates and other resources as needed.

What is the organization's role as a Closed Dispensing Partner?

Organizations will designate staff to train and serve in key roles within the Closed POD Plan. Organization's will work with Local Public Health staff to develop plans for dispensing that include strategies to receive, store, handle and administer medicine and medical supplies in an emergency.

How much will it cost an organization to become a Closed Point of Dispensing?

There are no direct costs to becoming a Closed POD. The medications and supplies provided during an emergency are free of charge. Organizations will need to designate staff and staff time for planning efforts and training time. The Local Public Health staff will work collaboratively with an organization's staff to assist in completion of a dispensing plan.

How does an organization receive medication/supplies?

In the event of a public health emergency, organizations will pick up the medications/supplies at a designated location within the County.

What are the liability protections related to dispensing medications?

Liability protections exist at both the state and federal level for Closed POD partners. Visit this website for more information: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/oep/legal/epstatutes.html>

Can the organization be a Closed POD partner if we do not have medical personnel on-site?

It is possible to become a Closed POD even without medical personnel on site.

Is it possible that an organization may need to operate a Closed POD after-hours, during a weekend, or on a holiday?

Public health emergencies can occur any time. It is important for an organization to be prepared to operate a Closed POD during regular business hours or during non-working hours.

If requested by Local Public Health, does a Closed POD have to open?

In case of a public health emergency Local Public Health staff will contact a Closed POD partner to request the site to open. It is up to the discretion of the organization to open as a Closed POD.

How does the organization support employees who commute long distances to and from work?

The Closed POD plan should account for all of its selected population such as employees, employees' families, and/or clients. Medicine and medical supplies should be made available to long-distance commuters; however, it is not required for commuters to go to the organization's dispensing site. It may be more convenient for the commuter to go to an Open POD near their home.