

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Secretary Catherine Torres, M.D.

HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
Secretary Michael S. Duvall

For Immediate Release  
May 23, 2011

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### **New Mexico Dept. of Health Demonstrates Readiness to Deal with Terrorist Incident**

(Santa Fe) -- The New Mexico Department of Health recently conducted an emergency preparedness exercise to demonstrate its ability to respond in the event of a bioterrorist incident. The exercise tested the New Mexico Department of Health's plans to receive and distribute the medications from the Strategic National Stockpile, a national repository medications and medical supplies designed to rapidly supplement and re-supply local and state public health agencies in the event of a national emergency.

"The Department of Health has partnered with multiple federal, state, and local agencies to develop procedures to receive and distribute the Strategic National Stockpile in the event of an emergency," said Department of Health Cabinet Secretary, Dr. Catherine Torres. "This exercise demonstrates our commitment to plan and prepare for an incident of this nature."

As part of the exercise, the New Mexico Department of Health's Bureau of Health Emergency Management coordinated with regional public health offices and local communities throughout the state to simulate their ability to receive and distribute life saving medical supplies in the event of a terrorist incident. There are five public health regions in New Mexico and each is responsible for putting together Regional Countermeasure Distribution Plans. The plans incorporate surrounding cities, towns and counties in the region and ensure a wide coverage for everyone in New Mexico.

Participants were given a simulated event involving the intentional release of anthrax spores in multiple areas of the state. Responders demonstrated their ability to handle requests for medication and supplies from throughout the state as well as maintain tactical communications between all distribution sites and provide the public with event specific information.

"It was great to see firsthand the state team in action working together to support the Department of Health in a simulated large scale health issue," Homeland Security and Emergency Management Secretary Michael S. Duvall said. "I'm constantly impressed by the hard work and

dedication of state and local municipality employees as they exercise the steps necessary to protect citizens from all types of manmade and natural hazards.”

The exercise was completed in cooperation with the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security, the New Mexico Department of Public Safety, the New Mexico National Guard, the New Mexico Board of Pharmacy, the New Mexico Department of Transportation and the New Mexico Medical Reserve Corp Serves. Other partners in the exercise included emergency management, law enforcement, tribal affiliates, fire, non-profit organizations, schools and local planning committees.

More information on the Strategic National Stockpile can be found on the Centers for Disease Control website at <http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/stockpile.htm>