



PUSH PARTNER FAQs



Q: When would businesses be asked to dispense medications at their own facility?

A: The only time the Health Department would ask businesses to dispense medications to employees and their families without medical oversight would be in the very rare event that there is a great risk to the whole population and preventive medications need to be taken immediately. This also assumes that the whole region or state is affected and that is why we can not get enough licensed medical personnel to help us dispense medications quickly enough.

Q: Are the Health Department staff going to run the PUSH PARTNER clinic to dispense medications?

A: No. Once a Memo of Understanding agreement is signed, Maricopa County will provide training at your site. It is the responsibility of the PUSH PARTNER to ensure the forms and protocols are available at the time of an event and that sufficient numbers of current employees have been provided training by MCDPH. MCDPH can only assume the liability for dispensing if PUSH PARTNER employees have been trained in sufficient numbers to provide the mass dispensing at the PUSH PARTNER facility. At the time of an event, the Health Department will automatically send a shipment of medications based on the number of PUSH PARTNER employees. PUSH PARTNERS can request additional medication if the initial delivery is not sufficient, but are responsible for tracking the medications provided and returning any unused medications.

Q: Are we required to recruit medical staff to dispense medications to our employees?

A: No. During a declared public health emergency when a life-threatening event occurred and the whole county, region or state population need to receive prophylaxis (preventive) medications in a very brief period of time, the Governor is expected to waive dispensing regulations to allow non-medical staff to help dispense medications.

Q: Where do we refer employees if they have medical problems or medical questions about the medications we are handing out?

A: We will provide you with scripted procedures to follow (you will be educated on this process in more detail during the MCDPH training). Those who are “iffy” about whether or not they should take the medication will be given the life-saving medications to take home with them and told to consult with their own doctor.

Q: Will people be allowed to pick up packets for their family?

A: Yes. The PUSH PARTNER will determine the limit to how many “packets” or doses of medication a person can collect.



Q: Are the medications in unit dosages?

A: Yes. You will be given the medications already packaged with clear instructions and precautions just like any other medication received at a local pharmacy.

Q: Do you provide any kind of injectables?

A: In general, no. We would only call on the majority of our PUSH PARTNERS in an extremely widespread event where we have emergency medications available in the form of pills or tablets. Using the accompanying forms and instructions provided by the health department, your staff will be able to reasonably dispense the medications to other employees and their families. Some agencies, such as hospitals and care facilities, may be provided vaccines, as they would have the trained medical staff available to provide injections.

Q: Could someone be turned down for medication during the dispensing process?

A: No. Each PUSH PARTNER would receive guidance about the medications developed by the Maricopa County Health Department. Dispensing staff would provide pre-prepared written information about the reason for the emergency medications, benefits and possible side effects of taking the medication to all employees. Even in an emergency, each person can make the decision whether or not to take the medication. However, if the person could potentially contaminate or transmit the disease to someone else by not taking the preventive medications, they may need to separate themselves or quarantine themselves for a period of time.

Q: Are there multiple drugs in case I know that I am allergic to one of the medications being dispensed?

A: Yes. Depending on the situation (example: in the case of, an aerosolized anthrax release) we will provide more than one type of antibiotic.

Q: If I have employees with Medical or nursing licenses who will help oversee the dispensing of emergency medication, how will they be protected from medical liability?

A: Provided a Memo of Understanding has been signed as is current with Maricopa County Department of Public Health, and site training of employees by MCDPH has occurred, MCDPH will assume liability for persons acting on our behalf in an emergency like this. In a declared emergency, the Governor can waive certain scopes of practice that would affect those with medical licenses which may allow for lay people to dispense medications without a license in a public health emergency where large populations would be placed at risk of death or serious illness if medications or vaccines are delayed. Of course, no liability coverage will be provided for anyone who has not gone through the MCDPH PUSH PARTNERS training or does not following the guidelines provided by MCDPH.



Q: What are the planning parameters for how large the release is and when the Health Department will provide prophylaxis (preventative medications) to everyone?

A: It will depend upon the situation at the time and the level of immediate risk to the population. Currently our planning efforts are based on a worst case scenario where we will need to dispense medications immediately to the entire county. We will follow the guidance of the CDC and the Arizona Department of Health Services. However, the Maricopa County Health Officer can declare a local emergency and make that decision for Maricopa County.

Q: Is security for the PUSH PARTNER facility required and who is responsible for providing it?

A: Some of the PUSH PARTNERS, such as hospitals, have an existing security force on site. The PUSH PARTNER sites are intended to be private, non-public sites where employees can get medication so the PUSH PARTNER is responsible for providing any security they think might be necessary. It is advisable to let your employees know not to broadly discuss with their neighbors and friends that they are receiving medications through their employer.

Q: Do the 4.4 million people who are counted as the population of Maricopa County accurately reflect the number of people in Maricopa County during the winter?

A: That number is estimated high to include the snowbirds and other non-residents who may be present in Maricopa County at any particular time. However, there is no limit to how much of the medication that we can request and dispense to the public. By working with our PUSH PARTNERS ahead of time we are able to better plan for specific populations and create other ways to ensure that our residents, our workforce and our visitors receive their medications.

Q: What happens if someone overdoses on the medication because “if one is good more must be better”?

A: That is always a possibility when someone leaves a pharmacy or dispensing site with their medication. You will be given instructions on how much medication to take and when you should take them (this will be provided by the Health Department). It is up to each person to follow the directions.

Q: Does the Maricopa County Public Health Department have a plan to include what to do if electricity and/or phones are out?

A: Yes. All Hazard Plans for Maricopa County cover electrical and telephone outages. It is clearly a challenge but the Health Department is also required to address these issues if life-threatening events should occur and we must respond to save lives.

Q: How much time is expected for training for PUSH PARTNER planning and time needed to set up a dispensing site at our facility?

A: A basic workshop takes about 2 hours for training. An additional 2-4 hours would be needed if you would like to do a functional drill. The amount and type



of training is up to you and your organization, but the 2 hour basic workshop for the employees who would be in charge of dispensing is the minimum necessary.

Q: We are only open Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm at our company. Are we expected to get medications to employees if something happens after hours even if many employees live out of the area?

A: Our goal is get the medications to the public as quickly as possible. Our PUSH PARTNER model is to provide emergency medications and, if an emergency of this scale were to happen after hours, MCDPH would anticipate you still want to provide for your employees and their families. Public Points of Dispensing (POD) Sites may be closer to employees' homes but significantly more crowded.

Q: What if there is Quarantine where people are located?

A: It would be impossible to quarantine a whole county. The Health Department will focus on isolating small numbers of individuals who are ill with a life-threatening contagious illness and separating or quarantining their close contacts for a limited period of time to ensure they don't become ill and contagious, too. If more than one person is ill in the facility with a life-threatening contagious illness for which there is no treatment or prophylaxis, then the facility might be quarantined for a limited period of time. In almost all cases, persons can be quarantined at home or at other more comfortable locations.

Q: How many different types of Biological Agents are being prepared for?

A: There are a handful of life-threatening biological agents identified for which we are required to have response plans in order to rapidly contain their spread. However, our MCDPH emergency response system is scalable to adapt to other unknown agents or new emerging infections that may arise.

Q: Are the PUSH PARTNER Points of Dispensing only for employees and their families or is the public allowed to come to those locations too?

A: Although we appreciate the spirit of community, PUSH PARTNER sites are intended only for the PUSH PARTNER employees and their families. Hospitals and other partners with licensed beds will be provided additional medication to cover those additional people already present at the facility. The general public will be directed in media messages to other points of dispensing, or PODs.

Q: What do we do with the completed Patient Medical Overview Forms and any medication that remains after dispensing to our employees and their families?

A: Each PUSH PARTNER is responsible, through the signed Memo of Understanding, for providing either the original or a copy of each completed Patient Form (if you choose to keep the originals), as well returning any balance of medication remaining to MCDPH. The number of employee/family member Patient Forms plus any remaining medication balance must equal the amount of medication provided to you.