



Medical Countermeasures Full-Scale Exercise: Protecting the Public In An Emergency

Prepared by: The Northeast Florida Regional Council



On May 22, 2025, the Florida Department of Health in Flagler County led a Full-Scale Exercise (FSE) to test the county's emergency response to a public health crisis involving a potential bioterrorism threat. This exercise, called "Medical Countermeasures: Point of Dispensing (POD), Planning and Response," was designed to ensure the community is ready to respond quickly and effectively in the event of a real emergency.

The training scenario was based on a fictional but realistic bioterrorism threat: a new fireworks vendor, Fanthraxtic Fireworks, distributed fireworks packed with lethal anthrax spores across Flagler County, just before the popular United Flagler 4th celebration. As thousands gathered for fireworks and many more purchased their own from roadside tents, the contaminated fireworks threatened to expose the community to a dangerous biological agent.

Partnering Organizations:

- Northeast Florida Regional Council
- Department of Health - Flagler
- Flagler County Emergency Management
- Flagler County Fire Rescue
- Advent Health
- Representatives from Emergency Operations Centers roles; including Transportation, Communication, Public Works, Information & Planning, Mass Care, Health & Medical, Military Support, Public Information, Volunteers & Donation, and Law Enforcement



Participants implemented the DOH-Flagler Strategic National Stockpile – Mass Prophylaxis and Immunization Plan, which outlines how to set up and operate Points of Dispensing (PODs). PODs are temporary locations where the public would receive life-saving medications, vaccines, or treatments during a real emergency.

The exercise focused on four key POD functions:

1. Intake – Managing traffic and greeting the public.
2. Screening – Identifying the right medication or treatment for each person.
3. Dispensing – Distributing medication or vaccinations.
4. Exit – Ensuring everyone safely leaves with proper guidance.

Participants tested how well these operations could run under pressure, and how community partners could work together to coordinate resources and keep the public safe.

This exercise was an important opportunity to practice how the community would respond in the event of a biological threat like anthrax. It helped ensure that local agencies and health care providers can:

- Rapidly distribute medical countermeasures.
- Coordinate with multiple agencies and partners.
- Maintain real-time awareness of medical supplies.
- Improve public health emergency plans through evaluation and feedback.

After the exercise, participants held a “Hot Wash” debrief, discussing what worked well and what could be improved. This feedback will help strengthen local emergency response systems and make sure Flagler County is better prepared to protect its residents during any future public health emergency.

