News From

Maggie Brooks

Monroe County Executive

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BROOKS ANNOUNCES COLLABORATIVE CIVIL PREPAREDNESS INITIATIVE

Supervisors & Mayors agree to identify and operate PODs throughout the County

Joined by local Supervisors and Mayors, Monroe County Executive **Maggie Brooks** today announced a new Civil Preparedness Initiative (CPI). Under this cooperative initiative, every Supervisor and Mayor has agreed to identify and help operate Point-of-Dispensing Clinics (PODs) in the event of a large-scale public health emergency.

"*By joining in this collaborative effort, our local partners clearly recognize the importance of serving residents closest to where they live,*" said **Brooks.** "*I applaud each of them for stepping up to help tackle the preparations needed and to provide staffing for PODs in their community.*"

The announcement came at a news conference prior to the County's Pandemic Flu emergency drill at the Dome Center. The drill demonstrated how all the PODs in the County should operate.

"*Since federal health officials have tasked us with being able to dispense medications to our entire County population in as little as 48 hours, these PODs will go a long way to help distribute medications or supplies in a timely manner and minimize travel during an emergency,*" **Brooks** added.

To accomplish the 48 hour requirement, County Health officials estimate all 40 PODs would need to serve between 400-500 persons per hour.

About the CPI

Monroe County has been divided into three regions – East, West, City. Some of the larger municipalities like the City of Rochester and the Town of Greece have more than one POD site. In some cases, smaller municipalities have joined together to operate a POD.

Municipal officials are now forming their local planning teams, identifying partners including local businesses and faith-based organizations, as well as assuring that the POD sites meet the necessary criteria. While County Health officials have already provided initial training and background in operating a POD, they will continue to work with County emergency planning staff over the months ahead to acquire the skills needed to run a POD.

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Monroe County has been developing plans for a bioterrorism or pandemic flu event. In January, a special Pandemic Flu page on the County website was launched that details what individuals, businesses, schools and health care organizations can do to be prepared for pandemic flu.

While such community planning will continue, health officials stressed that there are preventive health behaviors that individuals should adopt now:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. If you don't have a tissue, cough into the crook of your arm or sleeve so you don't get germs on your hands and spread them to others.

- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water. Use hand gels with alcohol if washing with soap and water is not possible.

- Try to stay at least three feet from people who are coughing or sneezing.

- Stay home from work or school if sick with respiratory symptoms.

- Keep a supply of non-perishable food, bottled water, and necessary medications to minimize trips to stores during an outbreak. Have a first aid kit and battery operated radio on-hand.

- Stay attentive and informed. Don't wait until pandemic flu has arrived to start learning and planning.

Residents who volunteered to serve as patients went through multiple steps to simulate what would be involved with getting an actual vaccination. Shots were not given. Evaluators were on-hand to time the event and to note where operations could be improved. Additional drills at the City, town or village level will occur in the future.

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