HELLO MY NAME IS: 

PUSH PARTNER

And my company plays an active role in protecting the health of our community
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Employee Health Affects Your Business’s Future

As the leader of your business you take the necessary precautions to protect your business by planning for the unexpected and managing situations at hand. The Tulsa Health Department (THD) takes the same approach to protecting the health and safety of our community.

THD recognizes collaboration between local government and private industry is more important than ever in the areas of emergency preparedness, response and homeland security.

Building community partnerships in Tulsa County is paramount. THD is calling on you, as a local business leader, to help protect your organization, your employees and our community by making your business a Closed Point of Dispensing (POD) Site through the Tulsa Health Department’s (THD) Push Partner Program.

Taking a few small steps now to prepare for future public health emergencies will not only protect your greatest asset, your employees, but also help prepare the entire community to respond effectively.

We thank you for taking the time and effort to read through this workbook and learn if the Tulsa Health Department’s Push Partner Program is right for you and your business.

This workbook is designed with you, the private industry, in mind. It delivers a detailed description of what a Push Partner (Closed Point of Dispensing (POD)) is and how making this commitment benefits your business, employees and Tulsa County.

The workbook will answer key questions about what it takes to become a Push Partner, the process, and how you and your company can work collaboratively with the Tulsa Health Department to deliver a positive impact on our community.

Making the commitment to become a Push Partner is one of the most effective ways to protect yourself and your employees during a public health emergency. The process is simple and you will have the confidence of knowing you are protecting your business and employees.
Imagine This Scenario . . .

Whether by accident or as part of a terrorist attack, a biological agent such as anthrax has been released and millions of people across the nation area at risk, including those in your community. People need preventative medications immediately, so the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ships supplies from its Strategic National Stockpile to local public health agencies. These agencies activate long-standing and well-rehearsed plans to dispense the medicine at Open POD sites. Even with the extensive preparation there are long lines at every Open POD site as over 600,000 people wait in line for their medication.

People are stressed about missing work, trying to calm their children as they endure the long waits, and tempers are starting to flare, but not for you and your employees. You planned ahead, and are activating your Closed POD site. Your employees know they and their families can avoid the public dispensing sites and will receive their medication at work.

With important paperwork already on file, the process is quick and easy. Your employees are their families are protected from harm, and your business keeps running smoothly. Medications are provided to your employees and their loved ones in a familiar place, from familiar faces and at no cost to them or the company.

The Strategic National Stockpile (SNS)

The Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) is a national supply repository of medical countermeasures (MCM) to supplement state and local public
health agencies during a public health emergency when local assets have been overwhelmed.

The SNS contains pharmaceuticals, to include, vaccines, antiviral, antitoxins and oral and intravenous antibiotics. SNS also contains medical and surgical items, to include chemical antidotes, airway management supplies, IV administration supplies and items to treat radiation burns and blast.

Within 12 hours the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) can deploy a large shipment from the SNS, known as a ‘push-pack,’ anywhere in the United States or its territories, to supplement and re-supply state and local health and medical resources. After this initial shipment, additional components such as vendor managed inventory (VMI) and other items from the SNS may follow.

State and local health agencies must have plans in place to receive shipments from the SNS and distribute their contents to the community quickly and efficiently. Tulsa County is one of 35 Mass Immunization and Prophylaxis Strategy locations in Oklahoma. The Tulsa Health Department will receive the shipments and have planned for and exercised their capacity to deliver medicines and medical supplies during a large-scale public health emergency to the residents of Tulsa County.

This is where your business can help…Collaboration between public health and the private industry is a crucial part of this planning effort. The utilization of Push Partners (Closed PODs) is one of many dispensing methods planned to deliver medication to 100 percent of the population within 40 hours, as determined by the CDC.

By contacting the Tulsa Health Department your business can learn more about the planning efforts currently underway in your community and how your business may play a key role. (Contact information is provided in the back of the workbook.)
Dispensing Sites: Public Health Emergencies

Point of Dispensing sites (PODs) are fixed locations where medications from the Strategic National Stockpile can be received by the public in response to a public health threat or emergency.

An **OPEN Point of Dispensing Site (Open POD)** is a location operated by a local public health agency and is open to everyone who lives or works in the community. **OPEN Dispensing Sites are meant to serve the entire public.**

A **CLOSED Point of Dispensing Site (Push Partner/Closed POD)** is a location which is operated by a private business for a specific population (i.e., employees’ families and resident occupants). **Push Partner sites are NOT open to the general public.**

Operating a Closed POD Site provides your business and your employees with extra security during a public health emergency. Essentially, your business may remain fully operational throughout an event and therefore minimize time lost by employees.

If your organization chooses to become a Push Partner, you will have an opportunity to combat the impact of a public health emergency on your business and your community. Working collaboratively with THD, you will be able to address an assortment of public health issues in a ground-breaking way.

As a Push Partner, your business will be better protected in the event of a public health emergency. You’ll receive and dispense medications and medical supplies directly to your employees and/or resident occupants (if applicable).

By providing the materials and support they need, your business will help to ensure the general health and well-being of your employees and all of those affected by the public health emergency.
Local Public Health: Current Planning Efforts

The Tulsa Health Department has developed plans which identify sites and resources available to support Open POD Sites during a public health emergency. Each site has been evaluated to ensure it is appropriate and plans have been made for all aspects of setting up the Open PODs, including:

✓ Communicating with the public
✓ Communicating between emergency responders (police, fire and emergency medical services)
✓ Transportation of medicines and supplies to each site
✓ The clinic flow at each site
✓ Security and safety precautions
✓ Staffing for the site, including professionals and volunteers
✓ Necessary supplies
✓ Medical Countermeasure (MCM) Tracking

How it Works

During a public health emergency, THD would need to rely on many different community partners to help provide all the services necessary to dispense emergency medications to the population. Closed PODs (Push Partners) will be an important part of the process.
“As more and more local businesses have become Push Partners in Tulsa County, our response efforts to public health emergencies have become more rapid and effective. Our collaborative efforts with Push Partners have helped to protect the health of our community.”

- Emergency Preparedness and Response Program

Tulsa County currently has ten primary Open POD locations and five alternative Open POD locations. MCM received during a public health emergency from the SNS assets will be apportioned to each location and dispensed to each operating POD site. Depending on the scope of the incident THD may choose to activate all of the primary POD locations or a portion thereof.

Existing Push Partners will activate their Closed POD plans and provide MCM to their targeted population. Activation of Push Partner’s relieves some of the burden on the local health department by allowing Push Partner organizations to provide MCM to their employees, employee family members and clients where applicable, thus lessening the demand on each of Tulsa County’s Open PODs.

How Push Partners (Closed PODs) Fit into Planning

Push Partners will play an important role in any situation where it is necessary to provide emergency medications to the entire population. Traditional medical providers, such as hospitals
and medical clinics will likely be overwhelmed during a large-scale public health emergency. Additionally, Open POD sites will be highly stressed in a situation where the entire population needs to be given medications in a short time frame.

However, Push Partners will help relieve some of the pressure on Open PODs by reaching portions of the population independently. As a result, long lines and public anxiety can be reduced and resources utilized more efficiently.

Push Partners can also help businesses ensure their employees are protected and therefore able to continue working and/or return to work more quickly. Employees will feel secure in knowing their company is willing to make a commitment to ensure they and their families are taken care of in the event of a public health emergency. As employees feel more confident in the steps your business has taken to protect them, they will likely feel an increased sense of commitment and loyalty.

Finally, Push Partners can be an appropriate way to reach certain special populations who may find it difficult to access Open PODs. Ultimately, partnering with THD to become a Push Partner is crucial in protecting the health of our citizens and enabling recovery efforts on a local level.

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Screening and Dispensing Process

Completing medical evaluations/health assessments

One of the greatest values of a Closed POD is paperwork can be completed ahead of time for the employees and family members who will receive the emergency medications. At an Open POD, however, large numbers of people will report at the same time, and everyone must fill out a required medical evaluation and contact form (for each individual which will receive MCM) before they can receive medications. As a Push Partner your business can provide the necessary forms to employees in advance and keep them on file until they are needed. Information can be updated periodically, perhaps annually, to reflect any changes in health status. When and if an emergency occurs, the forms will be on hand to simplify the dispensing process.

Required forms will be provided on a thumb drive once your business commits to becoming a Push Partner. You may choose to use either on-site or contracted medical personnel to oversee the medical assessment process to ensure proper health safety and privacy measures are being observed.

Protecting Employees’ Families

During any emergency, employees are most concerned with the health, safety and protection of their loved ones. For this reason, we recommend you plan to provide medications to your employees’ families as well. Though this may not be a requirement to become a Push Partner, it will greatly increase buy-in and support from your employees if they know in an emergency their loved ones will be provided for also without having to visit an Open POD.

The exact definition of a family member is, however, up to you to decide. Definitions might include anyone claiming residence at the employee’s household, those individuals
identified as dependents on the employee’s tax forms or insurance coverage, or an employee plus a specified number (one, three, five, etc.) of other individuals. Regardless of the approach you adopt, your decision should be clearly communicated to employees and included in your agency’s emergency plans. Procedures should be in place to obtain medical evaluation forms (as described above) for any Individuals served by your Closed POD.

**Educating People**

It is important to provide accurate and complete information to your staff. Let your employees know why and how the site would be established, and how the medication dispensing process will work. This will provide your employees with confidence in the overall approach, and is an opportunity to present accurate and reassuring information before and during the emergency.

The following topics should be addressed in the information/education process:

**Possible threatening agents**

In a public health emergency it is very important that people are informed of the true nature of the threat. They need to know the answers to questions like:

- How do I know if I’ve been exposed?
- What are the symptoms?
- What are the long-term implications?
- How do I report an adverse reaction to the MCM?
- Is the disease contagious? If so, what do I need to do to protect myself and my family?
Fact sheets about some possible threatening agents will be provided along with Medication Factsheets on the Push Partner Thumb Drive.

**Medications**

Your employees will also need to know about the types of medication which may be available to protect against or treat certain biological agents. They need to know how long they will need to take the medication and other details related to the specific situation. Information Sheets regarding the medications from the SNS dispensed at your location will be provided. If you decide to participate as a Push Partner, your business will receive updated information from THD as it becomes available.

**Eligibility Requirements**

**Medical Personnel Required**

To become a Push Partner, you will need to have medical personnel available who can legally dispense medications. Regulations identifying who can legally dispense medications are determined by state law. Check with THD regarding the policies which apply to your jurisdiction.

Your business may have medical personnel already on staff, or you may choose to arrange for outside medical personnel to come into your location. Such an arrangement will require a standing agreement between your business and the outside agency or staff, including a clear understanding of how such an agreement will be activated at a time where their services will likely be in high demand.

**Minimum Targeted Population**

To become a Push Partner, you will need to have a targeted population greater than 300 employees, employee family members and clients, if applicable. To estimate your total
targeted population multiple the total number of employees/clients by 2.5 for the total estimated courses of MCM required for your dispensing site (2.5 is the average family size determined by the U.S. Census).

Medical Countermeasures

As a Push Partner, SNS assets will be supplied to your organization at zero cost and you must agree to provide the MCM to your targeted population free of cost.

Closed POD staffing

As a Push Partner, staffing (medical and non-medical personnel), all equipment utilized and the POD location are supplied by the Push Partner organization. THD can assist in the planning efforts, but it is the organizations role to operate the dispensing site during an emergency.

Develop or Expand Continuity Plans

Your business should develop a comprehensive Continuity of Operations Plan (also known as a COOP). Continuity Planning helps businesses, corporations and government agencies ensure essential functions/services will continue during a wide range of emergencies and events. A COOP allows you to anticipate potential emergencies and develop procedures necessary to ensure employee safety, as well as continuity of business. If your business already has a COOP in place, update it to include a mass dispensing component and outline the procedures for Closed POD activation. Information in this workbook can serve as a guideline for developing that section.

Protect Your Assets: Prepare Your Employees

As your business plans to become a Push Partner, employees should be informed about the process and how it will affect them. Encouraging input and substantial feedback from employees will add value to the emergency preparedness
measures of your business as a whole. Identify employees within your business who will assist with the planning and preparation process and involve them early.

**Appoint a committee**

Appoint a committee or workgroup which can use this workbook to develop a comprehensive Push Partner Plan. This committee should include human resource personnel, continuity managers, medical advisors, logistics specialists and security staff. THD will provide a template for the plan and may assist in the development of your site specific plan.

**Determine who your site will serve**

Decide whether you will accommodate employees’ families in your preparedness effort, and identify beforehand how you will define *household, dependents or family*. Then determine how many total employees and family members will be served so you can estimate the amount of medication needed at the time of a public health emergency (Employee/clients x 2.5 equals total require MCM).

**Provide education/information**

Provide people with as much information about dispensing site operations as possible. If you are not already doing so, consider having key employees trained in emergency preparedness, National Incident Management System (NIMS), and the Incident Command System (ICS). Emergency preparedness training courses, listed on the next page, can be instructor-facilitated at your organization or taken online. These courses will help educate your employees about emergency preparedness procedures and protocols.
Identify a dispensing location on the premises

In order to dispense medications to a large number of people in a relatively short time, you will need to identify ahead of time a particular location on the premises which is capable of certain accommodations. This area should be fairly large and open, preferably a large meeting room or cafeteria.

Some key factors to consider include:

✔ Separate entrance and exit
✔ Easily identified by all employees
✔ Separate area to secure medications and supplies
✔ Accommodations for functional and access needs
✔ Able to accommodate tables, chairs and large groups of people

Determine security needs and capabilities

Consider your current security resources and capabilities and determine if additional security will be needed in an
emergency to protect your facility and staff. Employees attending the Closed POD will need to feel safe to do so. Furthermore, all medications will need to be secured at all times.

**Identify/purchase/store necessary supplies**

- Office supplies (pens, clipboards, etc.)
- Tables and chairs
- Bags or envelopes
- Medical supplies
- Signage and forms

**Develop Your Procedures**

The planning committee should take charge of developing procedures directly related to CLOSED POD operations in collaboration with THD.

Determine procedures specifically related to the activation, set-up, operation and deactivation of the Dispensing Site. Have procedures such as emergency call-down lists (also known as emergency calling trees) in place. The committee should lead the development of these procedures and work with THD as needed so all parties involved are aware of the plans and procedures.

**Determine how medications will be requested, received and/or returned**

Your business will need to collaborate with THD to develop protocols for requesting a supply of medication from the national stockpile. You should have a count of the number of people you will supply with medications ready at the time of the emergency. This can be accomplished by maintaining accurate records and forms for employees and their household members, if applicable. THD will contact your business regarding the Push Partner activation and the transfer of medications. The medications
shall be picked up at a predetermined location and transported to your dispensing site (a security escort is recommended). You should also identify individuals authorized to accept and sign for MCM and provide this information to THD. A Push Partner ID will be issued to your agency and shall be presented to receive MCM. Your security personnel should be on-hand at all times when the medications are at your Closed POD and being dispensed.

Some businesses may also choose to purchase a stockpile of specific medications for employees and their families to further expedite the dispensing process. If you are interested in this possibility, please consult with THD.

**Firm up plans for handling medical emergencies, security concerns, etc.**

Your plan should include procedures for handling small/typical emergencies which could potentially happen during the dispensing process. Consider and plan for:

- ✓ Minor medical emergencies – Call 9-1-1?
- ✓ Security breach – Call police?
- ✓ Handle on-site?

**Exercise Your Plan**

Consider conducting exercises with THD. Make sure to practice the procedures you put into place. Exercising plans helps to identify any problems which can be rectified long before an emergency occurs.
THD Closed POD Push Partner Program: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is a Closed POD Push Partner?
   A: An organization (Push Partner) that, when requested by Tulsa Health Department (THD), will operate a Closed point of dispensing (POD) to provide medical countermeasures (MCM) to their employees, employee families and, if applicable, their clients (homebound, patients, inmates, business partners, etc).

Q: What are medical countermeasures (MCM)?
   A: Vaccines or antibiotics that may be initiated either before an exposure or after a confirmed disease related incident.

Q: What are the criteria for becoming a THD Push Partner?
   A: THD Push Partners are required to have a minimum target population size (employees, employee families and, if applicable, their clients) of 300 individuals, and Medical personnel on staff (or available through contract) who are legally able to provide MCM.

Q: Are Tulsa Health Department staff going to run the Closed POD?
   A: No. The Push Partner organization is responsible for providing staff and plans to run the Closed POD.

Q: What Biological Agents could trigger a MCM response?
   A: The US Public Health System must be prepared to address various biological agents and to have response plans in order to rapidly contain their spread. MCM response could be triggered by diseases such as Anthrax, Plague, or Pandemic Influenza. Public Health emergency response systems are also scalable to adapt to unknown agents or new emerging infections that may arise.
Q: What are the planning parameters for when the Tulsa Health Department will provide MCM to everyone?

A: It will depend upon the situation at the time and the level of immediate risk to the population. Currently, THD planning efforts are based on a worst-case scenario where it is necessary to provide MCM immediately to the entire population however, Tulsa Health Department does not guarantee utilization of Push Partner Closed PODs during public health emergencies.

Q: What are the requirements for Closed POD planning, training, and exercises?

A: The Push Partner Plan is a fillable form identifying key personnel, contact numbers, vehicle availability and where the organization will dispense/administer MCM, etc.

The training sessions cover the following topics:

- Overview of the Push Partner Program to explain the importance and impact the Push Partner Program plays during a public health emergency event within Tulsa County.
- Information pertaining to the overall Closed POD operations:
  - Push Partner activation
  - Assigned roles and responsibilities
  - Required ICS forms and documentation
  - Job Action Sheets and Just-in-Time training tools
  - MCM pick-up/return specifications
  - MCM dispensing and vaccine administration
  - Demobilization

- Upon completion of the training sessions the Push Partner organization will exercise their Push Partner Plan with the key personnel identified in the plan.
**Q:** If an organization is only open Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm, is the organization expected to provide MCM if something happens after hours even if many employees live out of town?

**A:** The goal is get the medications to the public as quickly as possible. The Closed POD model is primarily used to provide MCM on-site during normal business hours. However, if a public health emergency of this scale were to happen after hours, you would have the option of opening your Closed POD site or having staff or clients go to THD Open POD Sites closest to their homes.

**Q:** Is the public allowed to come to Closed PODs?

**A:** Each THD Closed POD Push Partner will focus on just their employees, employee families and clients, if applicable. Closed PODs are not open to the public.

**Q:** Where are employees referred if they are symptomatic?

**A:** Push Partner organizations should encourage sick or symptomatic individuals to not come to the Closed POD. If a symptomatic individual does come to the Closed POD the organization should refer the symptomatic individual(s) to a health care facility without providing MCM. This limits their exposure to non-symptomatic individuals.

**Q:** Could someone be turned down for MCM during the process?

**A:** Yes. There may be some individuals who have contraindications or allergies to the MCM offered, or have a complicated medical history in which case they should be referred to their own doctor.

**Q:** Can individuals pick up MCM for their family?

**A:** Yes. An individual may pick up oral medications (MCM) for themselves and up to nine family members (10 courses). Vaccine administration requires the individual be present.
Q: Are the MCM in unit does? (For one person)  
A: Yes. You will be given the oral medications already packaged with clear instructions and precautions just like any other medication received at a local pharmacy. Medical personnel will most likely be required to draw vaccine into syringes for vaccine administration. Vaccine could come in multi-dose vials.

Q: Are there multiple drugs in case of allergy to one of the MCM being provided?  
A: Yes. Depending on the situation (example: in the case of an aerosolized anthrax release) THD will provide more than one type of MCM.
If you have any questions about the information contained in this workbook please contact us. We look forward to building a working relationship with your business and adding your business to our growing list of Push Partners in Tulsa County. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Contact Information

Emergency Preparedness Community Outreach Nurse
Tulsa Health Department
5051 South 129th East Avenue
Tulsa, Oklahoma, 74134-7004
981-595-4505 office
918-595-4588 fax
THDEPD@tulsa-health.org

Mass Care Supervisor
Tulsa Health Department
5051 South 129th East Avenue
Tulsa, Oklahoma, 74134-7004
981-595-4505 office
918-595-4589 fax
THDEPD@tulsa-health.org
Please fill out and return this form to:

Tulsa Health Department
Emergency Preparedness & Response Program
5051 South 129th East Avenue
Tulsa, Oklahoma, 74134-7004
Or
Fax to EPRP at 918-595-4588

Acknowledgement of Interest

☐ Yes, we want to participate in the Push Partner Registry! We would like to schedule a time to meet and discuss the Push Partner program.

☐ No, we are not interested in participating in the Push Partner Registry.

In the event of a large-scale public health emergency requiring distribution of medications to the public, we would like to do our part to dispense these medications to our employees (and possibly their families) and clients, if applicable. We will attempt to maintain an accurate record of coordinator information and estimated quantity for employees, employee family members and number of clients or residents for our organization with the local Public Health authority. **We understand completing this enrollment form is not a binding contract.**

Organization and Coordinator Information

Name of Organization:

Street Address:
Primary Contact

Name: Position/Title:

Work Phone: Home Phone:

Email: Cell/Pager:

Backup Contact

Name: Position/Title:

Work Phone: Home Phone:

Email: Cell/Pager:

Estimated Numbers of Employees and Clients/Residents/Population

Please provide information about your organization at full capacity.

# Employees:

# Household Family Members of Employees*:

# Clients/Residents Served**: 
TOTAL [Employees + Family Members + Clients (if applicable)]:

*Estimates of family members can be calculated by multiplying the number of employees and clients by 2.5 (average number of persons per household).

Of the total above, please estimate the breakdown into the following age groups:

**Older Adults:** ________________________________
(Age 65+)

**Adults:** ________________________________
(Ages 18-64 AND children over 90 lbs.)

**Children:** ________________________________
(Under 18 AND weigh less than 90 lbs.)

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Tulsa County Push Partner!