



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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St. Charles County Department of Public Health to Host a Bioterrorism Response Exercise

Community Members, Groups Invited to Participate in "Star-Spangled Fright" Oct. 10

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – The St. Charles County Department of Public Health will conduct "Star-Spangled Fright", a bioterrorism response exercise, with events planned for Oct 1-10. Community members and interested groups are invited to participate in the operation of the exercise.

The department is one of more than 25 organizations in both Missouri and Illinois playing a role in this regional exercise that tests the ability to deliver medical resources in response to a public health emergency. Although these jurisdictional Emergency Response Plans have been in place for several years, the Star-Spangled Fright exercise marks the first time an extended operation (multiple days across multiple jurisdictions) will be tested in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area and is one of the first times this has been exercised by regionally cooperative health departments in the United States.

"While we hope we'll never have to implement this plan in a real situation, we regularly test our capabilities in the event that we should," Nick Kohlberg, St. Charles County Public Health Emergency Response Planner said. "Practicing with our county coalition and volunteer team will help this community become better prepared for all types of emergencies we may face. Along with testing the ability to implement our department's response plan, this operation further strengthens the regional partnerships we've established."

To practice roles outlined within St. Charles County's plan, the Star-Spangled Fright exercise will simulate the response to an incident requiring the distribution of medication to residents. Many of the designated tasks are activities that public health departments complete daily — such as disease surveillance, distribution of preventative medication and sharing of health education messaging — while others involve efficient cooperation with various response organizations. Local health departments are required by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state evaluators to practice individual components of their plan regularly and to operationally test their entire plan at least every five years.

One vital operation in the plan requires trained personnel to screen patients to determine appropriate medical needs and distributing proper dosages of medicine to prevent illness and possible death from the incident. During Star-Spangled Fright, a mock distribution will be completed from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, Oct. 10 at St. Charles West High School (located at 3601 Droste in St. Charles). Volunteer participants are needed to serve as patients seeking medication for this, and individuals can register through sccpod2019.eventbrite.com. Interested groups of 15 or more should call Nick Kohlberg at (636) 949-7554 before September 27.

As a thank you to participants, the first 200 who register will receive a Chick-Fil-A sandwich following the exercise, and all who complete an event evaluation will be entered to win a gift package courtesy of Martian Car Wash.

(MORE)

(PUBLIC HEALTH EXERCISE – continued)

Along with the St. Charles County health department, assisting in this regional exercise are representatives from the St. Charles County Police Department, St. Charles County Regional Emergency Management, the City of St. Charles, the City of St. Charles School District, Compass Health, the St. Charles County Ambulance District, Community Council of St. Charles County, the Community and Children’s Resource Board of St. Charles County, the Developmental Disabilities Resource Board, Chick-Fil-A, Martian Car Wash, the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, the Illinois Department of Public Health and local health departments throughout Missouri and Illinois.

The exercise illustrates the implementation of the federally coordinated Strategic National Stockpile program that can deliver large and continuous quantities of medical resources in times of need. The program is prepared for immediate deployment of assets anywhere in the United States within a few hours of a declared emergency. Upon receiving these supplies, local public health departments would enact their plans to distribute them directly, at no cost, to all residents and visitors in the community. For more information on the program, please visit the [St. Charles County health department website](#).

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About the St. Charles County Department of Public Health

Through the efforts of its three divisions — Environmental Health and Protection, Health Services and Humane Services — the St. Charles County Department of Public Health provides a wide range of services that enhance the well-being of the community. To learn how the department assists this region or to find out about volunteer opportunities with any of the divisions, visit sccmo.org/PublicHealth or call 636-949-7400.

About St. Charles County

Founded in 1812, St. Charles County is one of the fastest growing counties in Missouri, and the state’s third largest county in both population and economic share. It is home to 15 scenic county parks, encompassing more than 3,643 acres with additional land under development and more in reserve for future development.

With a population of 395,504, St. Charles County is home to large employers including General Motors, Citi, MasterCard Worldwide and Boeing. It is ranked among the top 25 counties in the nation in high-tech job growth by the Progressive Policy Institute and consistently has the lowest unemployment rate in the Metropolitan St. Louis area.

St. Charles County employs more than 1,100 in more than 30 departments and offices, who work to make the county an excellent place to live, work and shop. For more information, please visit sccmo.org.