



NEW YORK CITY **OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**
Office of Public Information

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CERT TEAMS TAKE PART IN *PODEX*, A MULTI-AGENCY FIELD EXERCISE

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) from around the City participated in *PODEX*, a major multi-agency field exercise hosted by the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). The drill focused on the distribution of Strategic National Stockpile assets in response to a bioterrorist attack.

Coordinated by OEM, the two-day drill began with the City's health monitoring equipment testing positive for anthrax. Day one of *PODEX* involved the request for medical and non-medical supplies from the federal government, as well as their receipt at points of dispensing (PODs) around the city. Day two of the exercise consisted of the setup of mock PODs for distribution of medications to affected individuals, as well as the related security, public information and transportation issues that would arise in such a circumstance.

CERT members worked alongside POD staff members to manage the large number of individuals seeking medication. Some CERT members served as greeters, ensuring that members of the public entered and exited the POD in an orderly manner, while others worked in the triage area, evaluating individuals and determining the extent of their sickness. Some CERT members also worked in the dispensing section, providing medication and instructions to those in need.

“We are continually impressed with the ability of CERT members to work with emergency responders in times of crisis,” said OEM Commissioner Joseph F. Bruno. “Although *PODEX* was not a real emergency, it did provide an opportunity for CERT members to continue their training in an exercise that simulated a real-life crisis. Their efforts help make New York City the most prepared city in the country.”

Participating CERTs included:

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| - Battery Park City | - Manhattan |
| - Community Board 12 | - Manhattan |
| - East Sixties Neighborhood Assoc. | - Manhattan |
| - Manhattan Districts 1 and 2 | - Manhattan |



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| - North Shore | - Staten Island |
| - South Beach Civic Assoc. | - Staten Island |
| - Gateway Cathedral | - Staten Island |
| - Williamsburg | - Brooklyn |
| - Brooklyn South | - Brooklyn |
| - Bay Ridge / Bensonhurst | - Brooklyn |
| - Queens District 10 | - Queens |

Some of the many challenges exercise participants faced were to simultaneously staff and manage multiple POD locations, handle unsolicited volunteers, serve special needs and non-English speaking populations, provide accurate information to the public and oversee operations from the City's Emergency Operations Center.

Designed to test the City's ability to provide medication to individuals affected by a biological attack, *PODEX* examined interagency coordination in accordance with the Citywide Incident Management System (CIMS), overall emergency response, the integration of federal, state and regional assets and the City's ability to protect the public.

OEM is currently planning future tabletop and field exercises in which CERT members will be participants. The City is grateful for the continued efforts of CERT members to ensure New Yorkers' safety.

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