

Oregon Pharmacy-Public Health Memorandum of Understanding: An Opportunity to Strengthen Public Health Response Capacity

Purpose:

During many incidents affecting the public's health, pharmacies can play a critical role in effective response. This memorandum of understanding (MOU) provides a framework for timely, effective pharmacy response to public health incidents. Pharmacies can:

- Distribute and dispense vaccine during communicable disease outbreaks,
- Dispense antibiotics for treatment or prevention of illness during outbreaks,
- Assess and meet needs for medication among those displaced by storms or other incidents, and
- Expand healthcare capacity in a public health emergency by managing therapy for specific conditions under a state-issued treatment protocol (ORS 431A.015).

The MOU helps pharmacies and public health plan effective interventions and work together to meet the needs of the community.

Background:

- Patterned after a similar agreement in Washington State.
- Oregon document developed by representatives of Oregon State Pharmacy Association, Oregon Society of Health System Pharmacists, Conference of Local Health Officials, Oregon Board of Pharmacy, and Oregon Public Health Division, with broader input from public health and pharmacy communities.
- A majority of Local Health Departments and over 400 pharmacies are signatories

What the MOU does and does not do

Does:

- * Help standardize response across communities
- * Provide structure to simplify pharmacy-public health collaboration

Does not:

- * Require participation by signatories; this is not a contract.

To take part in the MOU

- Pharmacies and public health develop and agree on a response plan, as outlined in the MOU, available at:
 - Oregon State Pharmacy Association
- Responding pharmacies and public health then stay in touch, adjusting response plan, if needed, based on the evolving situation.

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Talking Points and Strategies for Engaging Local Independent Pharmacies

- Let pharmacists know you're from public health and that you want to discuss a new agreement that helps pharmacies and public health work together to meet community needs
- Just wanted to introduce self (if haven't met previously), and mention this new development and opportunity
- Share attached fact sheet
- If asked for examples of when this might be used:
 - Pharmacists helped assess and support needs for medicine of people displaced by hurricanes Matthew, Sandy, and Katrina
 - Several times in Oregon, pharmacies have been key responders in vaccinating people during community outbreaks of meningococcus, such as during the U of O and OSU outbreaks
- Stress that working with pharmacies has been valuable to public health in a number of settings, then ask about pharmacist's willingness to work with public health in emergency response
- Reiterate what the MOU does and does not do – does provide structure and help standardize response, does not require participation but rather supports collaboration
- Consider sharing contact information with pharmacist
- If they are interested, supply a copy of the MOU for them to review and sign
- If you get any questions you want help answering, contact Gillis Garrott (gillis.g.garrott@state.or.us, 971-673-0574) or Richard Leman (971-673-1089) at OPHD