

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
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North Dakota Department of Health Holds Full Scale Exercise of Emergency Response



Individuals from law enforcement and local public health units joined the NDDoH in a recent CDC Emergency Response drill.

BISMARCK, N.D. – On April 12 and 13, 2016, the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) hosted a number of federal and state agencies in a simulated disaster exercise. Local public health units were also involved by holding their own exercises in Dickinson and Elgin in conjunction with the state exercise. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) personnel attended the exercise to observe NDDoH in action and assess the response.

“Full scale’ means we act as though something is actually happening, much like actors on T.V.,” according to Tim Wiedrich, Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Section Chief and the exercise’s Incident Commander. “We create a scenario to respond to, place people in the functional positions they would have during an actual event, and create ‘curve balls’ as the exercise unfolds that requires participants to react to situations they do not anticipate. This allows us to analyze where we are doing things correctly and where we need improvement.”

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Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

The exercise was very detailed and took nearly a year to plan. George Gerhardt, Coordinator with NDDoH, planned and coordinated the exercise with representatives from several state and federal agencies. The exercise allowed EPR to utilize their new Department Operations Center (DOC) for the first time. “The new DOC served us well in terms of housing the staff that would respond to an emergency,” according to Gerhardt.



Part of the exercise consisted of unloading trucks with medical supplies and sorting the supplies on pallets for delivery to other state locations.

NDDoH could not have held this exercise without the support and work of other state agencies, including Highway Patrol, Department of Transportation, Department of Emergency Services, Department of Human Services, Information Technology Department, and the Office of the Governor. For more information, contact Tim Wiedrich at the number listed above.

– 30 –

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