

WORKING P A P E R

A Workshop Template to Assess and Improve SNS Planning

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SUMMARY

This document is intended to help public health agencies improve emergency preparedness planning related to the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS). It contains a template (presented in full in the Appendix) to guide public health agencies through a workshop intended to help them identify gaps in SNS planning and developing concrete strategies for addressing those gaps. The workshop template focuses on three specific functions:

- Pediatric dispensing (addressing the special needs of children during mass dispensing)
- Altered standards of care (adjusting normal standards in response to emergency conditions), and
- Allocation of scarce resources (making difficult trade-offs about priorities when resources are stretched thin during an emergency).

To develop the workshop template, we followed the exercise design process suggested by HSEEP (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2007). We also reviewed documents, plans, and policies related to pediatric dispensing, altered standards of care, and allocation of scarce resources. Using the HSEEP process and guidance from these documents, we developed the exercise objectives, scenario, and discussion questions.

The workshop objectives provide the framework for the scenario and discussion questions. The scenario and discussion questions provide a storyline that drives workshop participants towards developing or improving SNS plans for pediatric dispensing, altered standards of care, and/or allocation of scarce resources. The workshop structure is loosely adapted from the “Day After” methodology, developed by RAND for use by the Department of Defense (DoD) (Mussington, 2003). This methodology helps move the discussion from response to the scenario back to implications for procedures, plans, and policies. In this workshop, participants discuss their response to a future SNS deployment scenario, and then “rewind” to present day to identify changes in procedures, plans, and policies that could have improved the response. Participants then prioritize these changes and develop initial actions plans for implementing them.

The template consists of four parts:

- **Prelude: General Scenario.** The prelude contains a general “future” scenario of an anthrax attack requiring 48-hour full-community

prophylaxis. Following the prelude, participants hear a briefing about agency plans for responding to such a scenario.

- **Round 1: Function-Specific Scenario Additions.** Round 1 presents participants with scenario additions (injects) and discussion questions specific to the functions being addressed in the workshop. The facilitator leads participants in a discussion of how they would respond to the “future” scenario given current plans, policies, and procedures.
- **Round 2: Possible Policy and Plan Changes.** In Round 2, participants “rewind” to present day to identify barriers to responding to the scenario due to gaps in SNS plans, policies, and procedures and identify possible improvements.
- **Round 3: Preliminary Action Planning.** In Round 3, participants prioritize the improvements identified in Round 2, based on feasibility, likelihood for success, and impact, and then develop initial action plans for implementing them.

The workshop is modular. Users may tailor the function-specific scenario additions in any combination to focus on one or more of the functions noted earlier – pediatric dispensing, altered standards of care, and allocation of scarce resources.

While developing the workshop template, we consulted with a number of subject-matter experts and public health practitioners. However, to validate the usefulness and applicability of the template, we recommend that it go through an initial field testing process.