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NEWS RELEASE

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Preparedness exercise to simulate anthrax scenario Local agencies to gain emergency experience

In order to test Idaho's ability to respond to a potential bioterrorism incident, Eastern Idaho Public Health District (EIPHD) is working with Idaho Department of Health & Welfare, Brigham Young University-Idaho (BYU-I), local and state emergency management officials and other emergency response partners to conduct a regional full scale exercise. The emergency preparedness exercise is set for Madison County on Wednesday, May 1.

This training exercise is to prepare for a possible anthrax attack by practicing mass antibiotic distribution methods. If there should ever be an attack, EIPHD and its partners will need to dispense antibiotics to all affected residents within 48 hours. Volunteers will play the part of exposed community members during the exercise, which will take place at the BYU-I Center Courts on the campus of BYU-I starting at 1:00 p.m. The exercise will run for 2 hours, ending at approximately 3:00 pm.

Marilyn Anderson, training specialist at EIPHD, says, "We currently have a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan in place and we engage in these exercises to make sure that the plan will work in a real-life incident. If you wait until an incident actually happens to execute your plan, then it's too late and the opportunity to learn and change directions, if needed, is lost."

Exercises like these are a good way to work with the community and let them know what will be required of them if there was ever an actual incident. The exercise is designed to leave participants with a clear understanding of what to do in a specific emergency situation. Overall, this will help to keep the community as safe and healthy as possible.

State and local emergency preparedness staff is required to participate in exercises on a regular basis as part of their federal funding requirements. For additional information, please contact Mimi Taylor, Public Information Officer at EIPHD, at 208-533-3155 or mimi_taylor@phd7.idaho.gov.

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