

**Town of Red Hook
Disaster Preparedness Committee Minutes
June 6, 2012**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 P.M. by Chairman Tim Muldoon.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Chairman Tim Muldoon, Dick Franklin, Vincent Coluccio, Eleanor Troy

Members Absent: Tom Crisci, Chuck Simmons, Ken Cooper, Perry Sheldon, Jim Truitt, Pete Coon, Theresa Burke

Guest Participants: William Silta, Pharmacy Director, Vassar Brothers Medical Center, and Kelly Mace, Emergency Management Coordinator for Northern Dutchess Hospital.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR MEDICATION SHORTAGES

This was a special purpose meeting of the Disaster Preparedness Committee to develop an actionable plan of practical steps that individuals can take to prepare for medication shortages during emergency events. The committee proposes to incorporate these action items into the Town of Red Hook Emergency Action Plan, and utilize additional measures to educate the public on this important topic.

The Committee wishes to express its appreciation to guest attendees, Mr. Silta and Ms. Mace, for their time and for the valuable information they provided during the meeting.

Key Messages

The public needs to be made aware of the fact that during emergency events, no immediate assistance should be expected of either governmental or private sectors sources for securing medications. There are no stockpiles of medications that will be available for distribution to the population at large, and local healthcare facilities are not prepared to service the medication needs of a community.

Our goal is to prevent scenarios in which individuals experiencing an emergency episode become depleted of required medications. The key message is that individuals need to take responsibility for implementing their own preparedness for potential medication shortage events. This requires maintaining an ongoing and relatively simple set of actions to increase the likelihood of weathering an emergency without missing medications.

These actions include incorporating best practices such as: (1) maintaining a minimum one-week supply of extra medications; (2) keeping an updated list of all medications; and (3) providing emergency responders and others with a means of identifying a contact of choice in the event of incapacity to communicate.

Maintain an Extra Supply of Medications

The basis for maintaining a minimum one-week supply of extra medications is the presumption that medications will not be made available during and immediately following an emergency, but supplies are far more likely to be available within seven days or more following the emergency. For example, local pharmacies may be damaged or otherwise unable to provide medications, but operating pharmacies in other localities may be identified and accessed.

It is important to keep in mind that medications have a shelf life, and therefore the best strategy to reserve a fresh, ongoing seven day or more dosage of important medication is to refill the supply with one or two weeks supply still remaining. A take-home message is: Don't wait until you deplete your supply to refill your subscription!

Keep an Updated List of Medications

Individuals on medications are urged to maintain an updated list of all prescriptions, including essential details such as the name, strength, and dosage of the medication, and physician and pharmacy contact information.

The primary benefit of having a medication list is that it provides an opportunity to check for the availability of proper medications during an emergency. For example, an individual who requires medications while staying in a shelter will have access to people who can orchestrate getting the medications. Without a list, most people would be hard-pressed to identify accurately the key information, such as the exact name of the medication, dosage, strength, etc.

Pharmacists do not supply these lists, and preparing and updating a list is admittedly a difficult task for many people. One creative approach was offered, wherein family members create the lists for their elders and for those with special needs, and share the lists with other family members via internet to assure redundant backup.

Helpful tools for creating and updating medication lists were discussed. The Channing Bete Company sells an accordion card that is a convenient template for entering essential medical information. One possible means of distributing the accordion card (or similar product) is to provide batches to EMS crews for distribution to patients and patient caretakers. Online template checklists and phone apps are also available to capture, store and print out medication information.

Personal Identification and Contact Information

Personal identifiers with medical histories come in various formats and are also important adjuncts to personal emergency preparedness. Simple, low or no-cost options are available, such as creating a contact in the directory of a portable phone called “ICE”, which stands for “In Case of Emergency”. Emergency responders search for these contact records, which contain the contact information for person(s), physician or others entered by the owner of the phone.

Low cost options include Road-ID, a bracelet that contains similar personal identification and medical information. A necklace pendant with engraved contact and medical information worn by a Committee member was produced during our meeting.

Communication Strategy

Committee member experience at local public outreach events consistently finds that local residents are eager to take copies of publications created by the Town of Red Hook, and are decidedly not interested in most other publications. The Committee proposes to incorporate a new section on medication preparedness into the Red Hook Emergency Action Plan and to develop related pamphlets.

Attendees agreed that this coming September (the “National Preparedness Month”), is the optimum time to broadcast our medication preparedness message. The Committee will develop some memorable tag lines to be dispatched every six months, such as “Turn your clocks back – check your medications”, to reinforce the message. We also look to Panda and local print media for their coverage of this topic.

Action Items

Vin Coluccio and William Silta agreed to review online template checklists and phone apps that available to capture, store and print out this information, and jointly report findings back to the Committee.

Eleanor Troy agreed to obtain a sample copy of the Channing Bete accordion card and learn about pricing for possible purchase of a bulk amount by the Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Vincent Coluccio