



Boston Media Center

Press Release

CONTACT:

Media Center News Desk:

617-654-5771 (This number is only active on Sunday, Sept. 23)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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U.S. Postal Service Emergency Preparedness Exercise Successfully Completed

Boston- Today, residents of two Boston neighborhoods successfully received a unique delivery as part of an emergency preparedness exercise. At 7:00 this morning, 32 teams fanned out across the 02118 zip code in the South End and 02132 in West Roxbury to deliver a clearly labeled, empty cardboard box meant to mimic the size and dimensions of the pill bottles residents would receive during a real public health emergency. The box came with an informational flyer so that residents would understand that this is just a test, and that there is no emergency.

Residents did not need to do anything as a result of the deliveries and were urged to recycle the box and flyer.

The exercise, which was intended to evaluate how US Postal service letter carriers might play a role in delivering lifesaving medications during an emergency, is the third test of its kind in the nation.

The delivery method called for each letter carrier to be escorted by a Boston Police Department officer to simulate the level of security that would be provided to the carrier during a real activation.

Officials from participating agencies observed and evaluated several aspects of the exercise, including the transportation of materials to postal sites for pick up by the delivery teams, the assembling and dispatching of the 32 delivery teams, the systems for communicating with carriers and police along the routes, and the speed of delivery.

“I am very pleased to see how efficiently the letter carriers and police officers worked together to reach 23,000 households in 6 hours,” said Dr. William Raub, senior science advisor to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. “In the event of a real emergency, every minute will count. Today’s exercise indicates that the

postal delivery option will be an important method to get lifesaving medicine to people who need it.”

“We appreciate the efforts of Postal management and unions on working together to serve the residents of Boston,” said Charles Lynch, Boston district manager for the United States Postal Service.

“It took the cooperation of many agencies and the public to make this exercise work,” said Dr. Barbara Ferrer, executive director of the Boston Public Health Commission. “We’re appreciative of the shared commitment to our community’s health and safety, and look forward to continuing these productive partnerships in preparedness.”

“Coordination is crucial when managing an incident on the scale of a bioterrorist attack. The completion of this drill takes us another step forward in ensuring our city’s preparedness in the event of such an emergency,” said Boston Police Superintendent in Chief Robert P. Dunford. “The Boston Police Department is grateful for the opportunity to participate in this exercise with our local, state and federal partners.”

The postal carrier method is being examined as one potential means to distribute emergency medications in the event of a bioterrorist attack and would supplement other existing distribution methods used by states and localities. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the United States Postal Service will review the results of the exercise to determine the next steps in this effort.

The test in Boston coincided with National Preparedness Month.

The test was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the United States Postal Service. Other participating agencies included the National Association of Letter Carriers, the United States Postal Inspection Service, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the City of Boston, the Boston Public Health Commission, and the Boston Police Department.

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