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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public Health Begins Emergency Exercise in Jerome, Idaho

JEROME – Disasters happen. We are preparing now.

South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) and Jerome County Office of Emergency Management (Jerome OEM) are teaming up in a simulated anthrax response in Jerome County, Idaho. This regional drill is part of a larger statewide exercise to test the abilities of responding agencies in a public health crisis.

“Public health will step in to help anytime an emergency threatens the health of a whole community,” said Josh Jensen, SCPHD Public Health Program Manager. “That emergency could be anything from a terrorist attack, like anthrax, to a disease outbreak. We run these drills to make sure we’ll be ready to respond when we are needed.”

The statewide part of the drill begins today, April 19th, with a simulated anthrax attack. Over the next four business days, county and public health employees will test response plans as they respond to the simulated bio-terrorism. On April 24th SCPHD will open a point of dispensing (POD) at Jerome High School to hand out fake medication to volunteers.

“If a terrorist targeted Jerome County we might need to get medication to about 24 thousand people in 48 hours. That takes practice,” said Dan Schaffer, SCPHD Planner.

“We aren’t immune to disasters,” said Tanya Stitt, Jerome County Emergency Manager. “Hopefully we never have to use this particular training in real life, but we aren’t going to cross our fingers and wait to see.”

The exercise runs from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. on April 24th at Jerome High School. SCPHD is no longer taking volunteers for the exercise.

Media partners are welcome and encouraged to participate in the drill. If you are interested, please reach out to Brianna Bodily, SCPHD Public Information Officer, 24 hours before the exercise starts so she can reserve a spot for you.

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