



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF

HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH

Commissioner

Gotham Center
42-09 28th Street, 8th Floor
Queens, NY 11101-4132

September 12, 2014

Dear Chancellor Fariña,

As you know, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) conducted the Rapid Activation for Mass Prophylaxis Exercise (RAMPEX) on August 1 to test the mobilization of "Points of Dispensing" (PODs) to rapidly dispense oral antibiotics in response to an aerosolized anthrax attack in NYC. My staff worked closely with Department of Education staff for over a year to plan the exercise.

On the day of the exercise, DOHMH deployed hundreds of staff from 13 City agencies to 30 DOE facilities previously identified for such emergency operations, setting up PODs using supplies delivered by 22 trucks escorted by over 30 law enforcement officers from three jurisdictions, all coordinated from a central POD Operations Center—located in the DOE Emergency Operations Center—and Transportation Security Group. Within less than eight hours of staff arrival, all 30 PODS were ready to receive the public to distribute prophylaxis.

Staff deployed on the day of the exercise did not receive the date in advance, they were only aware that the exercise would be conducted in a two-week window from July 28 to August 8. DOE facility managers were not even informed the exercise was taking place, and were notified early in the morning on the day of the exercise, much as they would if this were a response to an actual attack.

While we are still analyzing the results, the overall success of the exercise was only possible because of the full support of your staff. A great deal of thanks goes specifically to your Director of Emergency Management, Angelo Lisa, who has worked for years with my staff to develop plans for the use of DOE facilities to respond to public health emergencies.

In an emergency, New Yorkers will be looking to the City to keep them safe. We look forward to continuing our work with DOE to fulfill this mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary T. Bassett".

Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH
Commissioner

MTB/ll