



March 14, 2008

Dear Parents/Guardians,

An upcoming emergency preparedness exercise at Oak Park and River Forest High School will test the Village of Oak Park's ability to dispense medications during an emergency. Students will participate in the exercise as a health education component of their Physical Education classes. The midday emergency response drill is scheduled for Friday, May 23 and will use the high school as a simulated clinic site. Students will be posing as residents who have come to pick up medication for their families. No real medications will be dispensed and no personal information will be collected. The goal is to test the Village of Oak Park's ability to activate, distribute and dispense preventive medications from the Centers for Disease Control Strategic National Stockpile should a real medical emergency arise.

During a real incident, residents would come to one or more clinic sites in the community to receive medications for their families. Depending on the severity of the situation, proof of residency might be required, and certain personal medical information would be collected to ensure proper medication and dosages. In a real emergency, the Village would need to dispense 1,080 doses of medication every hour for 48 hours to treat our entire population. For the May exercise, students will only pretend. This exercise will be similar to how a real incident would be managed, complete with controlled processing, orderly lines and assessment and treatment stations. Students will not provide any personal information and they will only receive empty medication bottles, which will be collected at the end of the process.

The Village has been testing its medical dispensing protocols in smaller-scale exercises for more than three years, helping to fine tune many of the details. However, to really assess our capabilities, we need to conduct an exercise on a much larger scale. With the help of our high school students, we will test the abilities of Village staff, emergency response partners, and volunteers to dispense medication in an orderly, efficient, effective and safe manner.

The medicine-dispensing event is just the public phase of the drill. Behind the scenes, the Village will be testing its incident command structure, which would manage resources in a real disaster, as well as its mutual aid agreements with other organizations and communities. Police, public health officials and equipment from neighboring communities will be involved. Stickney, Skokie and Evanston also will send administrators to observe as part of their own emergency planning efforts.

Should you have any questions about the exercise or emergency preparedness planning, please call the Oak Park Department of Public Health (708.358.5600) or OPRF High School Communications (708.434.3099). Information also is posted on the Village website (www.oak-park.us/drill) and the OPRF HS website (www.oprfhs.org) and is available via e-mail to health@oak-park.us.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Barwin
Village Manager

Attila J. Weninger
Superintendent