



For Immediate Release

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**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND IOWA PHARMACY ASSOCIATION TEAM
UP TO INVOLVE PHARMACISTS ON LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEES**

The Iowa Pharmacy Association (IPA) and the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) mailed a joint letter to over 3,300 pharmacists in Iowa seeking volunteers for emergency preparedness committees at local public health departments. A joint letter from IPA and IDPH was also sent to all 99 local public health administrators informing them of the expertise and knowledge a pharmacist can provide to emergency preparedness teams.

The joint letters outlined the following opportunities for pharmacists to provide valuable expertise to local efforts:

- ✓ Provide immunizations
- ✓ Assist with issues related to drug therapy, such as: drug contraindications, alternative treatment, allergies versus adverse drug reactions, and alternative routes of administration
- ✓ Assist in basic triage of patients
- ✓ Prioritize medication necessity to patient populations
- ✓ Educate community members on appropriate storage of pharmaceuticals if ideal storage conditions are unavailable
- ✓ Assist in securing drugs and supplies for long-term dislocation of a population; and assist with mass dispensing of prophylactic medication.

These letters also encouraged pharmacists to contact local public health agencies to volunteer.

Jay Currie, Pharm.D., ranked emergency preparedness involvement as one of his top two priorities during his term as IPA President. He stated during his presidential address at the 2007 IPA Annual Meeting, "As a profession dedicated to the health of our patients I believe we should become systematically engaged with the Public Health Department and other emergency response organizations to be part of the solution should we be called upon in an



emergency. Perhaps society doesn't expect it of us, but we should expect it of ourselves. Our response in the worst of times will be of untold importance in deciding our societal value when times are good." Increasing pharmacist involvement in emergency preparedness plans has been a priority initiative for IPA over the past year.

The Iowa Pharmacy Association is the state professional society of pharmacists, united for the purpose of advancing public health, particularly the pharmaceutical care of all Iowans.

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