

# Government and Community Organizations Band Together to Build Resilience

A unique partnership between CDC, the Georgia Department of Public Health, Cobb and Douglas County Public Health Departments, and the Transfiguration Catholic Church has resulted in a closed point of dispensing (POD), which will help keep the community safer in the event of a public health emergency. CDC's Community Resilience Activity (CRA) facilitates partnerships between State and local public health departments and community-based organizations to dispense needed Federal resources (such as medication) in the event of an emergency. Community organizations that participate in this program are called closed PODs, such as the one created at the Transfiguration Catholic Church in metro Atlanta.

Closed PODs serve their organizations' populations to relieve some of the medical countermeasure dispensing burden on open PODs run by local public health departments during a public health emergency. Closed PODs can quickly provide resources to the populations they serve in a familiar and comfortable environment. Other examples of community organizations with closed PODs include large retail corporations, hotel chains, and academic institutions.

Donna McNulty, a critical care nurse and Transfiguration Catholic Church volunteer is leading the church's efforts to become a closed POD location. McNulty said, "When CDC first approached me about making our church a closed POD location, I honestly had no idea what a closed POD was! I did tons of research and through that I was able to determine what would work for our parish. From that, we developed our closed POD plan."

Church members formed a closed POD team under McNulty's leadership to develop the plan in 2013. "We have a parish of 15,000 which means we would be dispensing medicine to about 4,500 parish households and we needed a plan to account for all of our members," said McNulty.

McNulty realized that for a 48 hour period the church would need over 800 volunteers to support a response. She was skeptical that she could recruit this many church members to volunteer, but she currently has over 1,300 volunteers! This partnership is serving as a model for other faith-based and community organizations around metro Atlanta and across the country.

By fostering relationships throughout the community, CDC is helping state and local partners strengthen their response capabilities. Collaboration between Federal, State, local and community partners help ensure that Federal resources are successfully dispensed to the affected population during an emergency.