



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**News Release**

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GOVERNOR

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**DOH EXERCISES MEDICATION DISPENSING CLINICS AS PART OF  
U.S. POSTAL SERVICE'S BIOHAZARD DETECTION DRILL**

HONOLULU – More than 300 workers from federal, state and city agencies participated today in a training exercise at the Honolulu Airport Post Office Facility. The goal was to rehearse a public health response effort that would be used to protect Hawai'i residents in the event of a bioterrorism attack.

“Today’s drill is a good example of the State partnering with other agencies to prepare for a public health emergency,” said Director of Health Chiyome Fukino, M.D. “We are continuing to make progress towards emergency preparedness since the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, but there is still a long way to go.”

The exercise simulated an activation of the United States Postal Service’s Biohazard Detection System (BDS) by a letter containing anthrax. The Hawai'i State Department of Health set up an on-site clinic to evaluate and provide medication to victims of the simulated bioterrorism attack. This was the first time a DOH medication dispensing clinic was practiced as part of a Hawaii BDS drill.

“The purpose of our Biohazard Detection System is to ensure the safety of our employees and customers and the integrity of the mail,” said Postal Service Homeland Security Coordinator Doug Aton. “We were pleased to be able to collaborate with local public health and safety officials on this exercise in order to ensure a timely and effective response to an actual biohazard alert.”

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As part of the exercise, Postal employees were evacuated from the Airport Post Office and underwent simulated decontamination provided by the Federal Fire Department and the Honolulu Fire Department. State Sheriffs from the Department of Public Safety, along with Honolulu Police Officers provided law enforcement, security and traffic control. Emergency crews were also present to provide medical assistance.

The BDS was created exclusively for the USPS in 2002 in response to the 9/11 attacks and anthrax letters. The system was first tested at the Honolulu Airport Post Office Facility in 2005. The BDS uses sophisticated DNA matching to detect the presence of anthrax in the mail. The equipment collects samples of air as the mail moves through a canceling machine. It absorbs the airborne particles into a sterile water base. This creates a liquid sample that can be sent to the DOH's State Laboratory for testing.

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