



## NEWS RELEASE

### ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 Montgomery, AL 36104

Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5534

[www.adph.org](http://www.adph.org)

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## CDC rates Alabama's preparedness with highest status

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Charles Thomas

Dena Donovan

(334) 206-5226

Alabama joins eight other states in having received "green status" for its level of preparedness to receive the Strategic National Stockpile program, known as SNS. SNS, a federal program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, helps state governments establish prepositioned caches of medicines and supplies that can be shipped quickly in the event of a large-scale public health emergency.

"Reaching this status took a team, and it will take a team to continue Alabama's success in the SNS program," said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, about the arduous process required to meet the upgraded status, "This achievement is a part of our continuing efforts to enhance our ability to respond in the event of a public health emergency."

A written report from CDC praised the clarity of Alabama's plan and the utilization of the Incident Command System structure with integration of SNS functions. Public health staff train employees and volunteers at least twice per year. Training has been provided in the cities of Birmingham, Huntsville, Mobile and Montgomery and at the Poarch Creek Indian Reservation.

The CDC report stated, "The Alabama Department of Public Health has developed an outstanding specific SNS preparedness plan that is incorporated into the overall state emergency response plan."

The SNS has large quantities of medicine and medical supplies to protect the American public if there is a public health emergency such as a terrorist attack, a flu outbreak, or a hurricane or an earthquake severe enough to cause local and state supplies to be exhausted. Medicinal supplies and pharmaceuticals will be delivered to any state in the U.S. within 12 hours. Each state has plans to receive and distribute SNS products to local communities as quickly as possible.

Dena Donovan, SNS coordinator of the health department's Bureau of Professional and Support Services, said, "Our emergency preparedness teams and emergency management agencies have done an excellent job in dispersing SNS information at the local level. Supplies have been purchased and are in place throughout the state in order to respond quickly to an event involving the SNS. This isn't a one-person show; the localities, including city and county emergency planners, have shown they are able to carry it out. Volunteers statewide in many disciplines are an important part of our success."

An act of terrorism or a large-scale natural disaster targeting the U.S. civilian population will require rapid access to large quantities of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies. Such quantities might not be readily available unless special stockpiles were created. No one can

anticipate exactly where a natural disaster or terrorist will strike and few state or local governments have the resources to create sufficient stockpiles on their own. Therefore, a national stockpile was created as a resource for all.

The SNS program works with governmental and non-governmental partners to upgrade the nation's public health capacity to respond to a national emergency. Critical to the success of this initiative is ensuring capacity is developed at federal, state and local levels to receive, stage and dispense SNS assets.

The SNS is a national repository of antibiotics, chemical antidotes, antitoxins, life-support medications, IV administration, airway maintenance supplies, and medical/surgical items. The SNS is designed to supplement and re-supply state and local public health agencies in the event of a national emergency anywhere and at any time within the U.S. or its territories.

The SNS Program is part of a nationwide preparedness training and education program for state and local health care providers, first responders, and governments. This training not only explains the SNS Program's mission and operations, it alerts state and local emergency response officials to the important issues they must plan for in order to receive, secure and distribute SNS assets.

CDC grades states' preparedness using red, amber and green ratings. Green is the highest grade that can be achieved. Other states that have been awarded this high status include Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Mississippi, New York, Tennessee and Virginia.

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