



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Several Central Ohio health departments are gearing up to test public health emergency response plans and hundreds of volunteers are needed. On June 18, the 11 health departments of the Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area will conduct a full-scale emergency exercise. The exercise will provide an opportunity for local public health to practice dispensing medication to the public in the event of a public health emergency. To realistically test these plans, nearly 500 volunteers are needed on June 18.

The Fairfield Department of Health is asking local residents and community volunteer groups to consider volunteering for the day to help protect our community's health.

"Volunteer actors play an important role in emergency exercises, and help provide as close to real world situations as possible. Only with these volunteers will we be able to truly practice how quickly and effectively we can mass dispense medications in an emergency. By volunteering, you are helping our community be better prepared to respond to health threats like a pandemic," said Merrilee Taylor.

Volunteers are needed June 18 from 7 a.m. to no later than 4 p.m. Volunteers will report at 7 a.m. to the Cooper Road Campus of Vineyard Columbus, 6000 Cooper Rd, Westerville. Volunteers will then be shuttled by COTA bus to the exercise location. Volunteers must be 18 or older and can be individuals or groups. All volunteers will receive free lunch and be entered into a drawing to win free passes to the Columbus Zoo and the Ohio State Fair.

To register as a volunteer, go to [www.bit.do/POD2015](http://www.bit.do/POD2015) today. For questions about volunteering on June 18 or to learn more, please email [tessafite@franklincountyohio.gov](mailto:tessafite@franklincountyohio.gov) or 614-525-3608.

This exercise is part of the Cities Readiness Initiative within the Columbus MSA. CRI is a federally funded program designed to enhance preparedness in the nation's largest cities and metropolitan statistical areas where more than 50 percent of the U.S. population resides. Through CRI, state and large metropolitan public health departments have developed plans to respond to a pandemic or other large-scale event.

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