POD ASSIST

What is POD Assist?

POD Assist is a webservice offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help partners (including local and state health departments) dispense and administer medical countermeasures (such as antibiotics, respirators, and vaccines also known as MCMs). POD Assist can be used during public health emergencies (for example an influenza pandemic, natural disaster, or national security emergency) and training exercises.

POD Assist allows for screening and triage of people needing assistance during a public health emergency. It also can inform which medical countermeasure to dispense including which product and its dose. It also keeps track of inventory levels to support better decision making and allocation of resources by public health responders.

POD Assist works by letting people self-register reducing the burden for public health staff. Members of the public can register also their dependents from their own smart phones and obtain a personalized barcode. Once an individual arrives at the Point-of-Dispensing (POD), the recipient presents the barcode to staff for scanning and triaging. With this information, POD staff can dispense and administer the correct medical countermeasure.

POD Assist reduces the burden on public health partners as it requires minimal resources to implement and maintain. Through analysis of POD Assist data, officials also gain insight into the scope and demographics of populations served.

POD Assist system features

POD Assist can collect data specific to any public health emergency. Furthermore, it can assist triaging and administering countermeasures while reducing the effort to collect and manage all this information. POD Assist is Internet accessible by using any standard Web browser, and it also can be deployed on a stand-alone basis to support operations when the Internet is not accessible. The POD Assist mobile app can be used by public health staff to collect barcode information without the need to buy computer equipment (Bring-Your-Own-Device).

+ Managing multiple simultaneous events and countermeasure types,
+ Customizing the data entry fields for specific event requirements,
+ Expediting data collection and POD throughput, and
+ Exporting data that enable jurisdiction-level reporting.

When has POD Assist been used?

In 2009 during the response to the H1N1 influenza (swine flu) pandemic, POD Assist (formerly the Countermeasure and Response Administration system or CRA) was used to monitor the amount of vaccine administered during the first weeks of the vaccination campaign to protect against the virus. This helped public health officials quickly evaluate vaccination campaign effectiveness.

State public health departments used POD Assist in 2015 to monitor and report persons returning from West Africa with Ebola exposure. CDC also used it during the 2020 CDC Personnel Influenza Vaccination Campaign.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

For more information, e-mail ctscloud@cdc.gov or visit
www.cdc.gov/csels/dhis/podassist/