

## Title:

Preparing for the Next Terror Attack -- Are we ready?

## Word Count:

424

## Summary:

We need to prepare now for the next terror attack so our nation can respond rapidly and effectively resulting in minimal damage.

## Keywords:

Terrorists, chemical attack

## Article Body:

Intelligence experts believe that it is only a matter of time before there is another terrorist attack in the U.S. With the recent scares in New York and Baltimore and the deadly terrorist bombings in Bali, Egypt, London and Madrid, these attacks are aimed at striking terror among millions of people. Of rising concerns is the fear that terrorists will use biological chemicals against us. What if this suspicious package contained a deadly chemical, such as smallpox or anthrax, are we ready? It appears not.

A study listed in Archives of Internal Medicine showed 631 doctors, mostly medical residents, were given a test prior to completing an online training course. On the pretest, half the doctors misdiagnosed botulism, 84 percent misdiagnosed plague and a case of routine chickenpox was misdiagnosed as smallpox by 42 percent of the doctors. "We've got a dangerous gap here and we need a much clearer strategic game plan," said Shelley Hearne, executive director of Trust for America's Health, which tracks how well states are prepared for bioterrorism or pandemic.

In addition to the lack of bioterror knowledge in health care professionals, high-ranking officials in the US Health and Human Services Department have stated major concerns about the government's ability to deliver medicines in the event of a bioterror attack. In response to these concerns, steps are being taken to address these issues. To improve the delivery of medicines in the event of a national emergency some suggested steps include the delivery of medicines from local fire stations, police stations, and even via the US Postal Service.

In the book Sledgehammer, Dr. Paulo J. Reyes describes a Smallpox outbreak, and

how rapidly the disease can spread, the potentially devastating effects of airborne contaminants, and the potential for extremely large numbers of fatalities. The point in writing the book, according to Reyes, is to bring to light the high potential for bioterrorist attacks in the United States and to demonstrate how critical it is to develop emergency response strategies to handle the delivery of medicines and the medical treatment.

The combined efforts of the United States government and the medical community are crucial in preventing millions of deaths in the event of such a disaster. Despite global efforts to eradicate terrorism, the threat of a bioterror attack remains high. The United States must prepare emergency response strategies and develop effective means of delivering medicines to all parts of the country. Let's prepare now so our nation can respond rapidly and effectively resulting in minimal damage and loss of life.