

# News Release

For Immediate Release

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## Local Medical and Emergency Agencies Participate in Bioterrorism Drill

(Batesville, Ark.) – The North Central Region (NCR), of the Arkansas Bioterrorism Committee conducted a Biological Weapons Tabletop Exercise on Wednesday at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. Arkansas Department of Health, 61<sup>st</sup> Civil Support Team of the Arkansas National Guard at Camp Robinson, the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management and other local officials also participated in the exercise.

The exercise was developed and carried out to address operational and policy level responses to a public health emergency in North Central Arkansas. The exercise is intended to provide an opportunity to explore a range of options and possible approaches in the event of an actual emergency. The objectives of the exercise were to test the decision making process, identify areas for refinement, review interaction and cooperation between local, state and federal agencies, identify the strengths and weaknesses of local resource coordination, develop cooperation between medical and criminal investigation, access medical capabilities and test media response plans.

“Participation in today’s exercise was tremendous with 12 of 13 counties represented,” said Tony Thompson, Chairman, and NCR Bioterrorism Committee. “The drill scenario simulated the spread of a toxin at regional celebrations. Teresa Ferricher, Lee Jones and

Julie Smith prepared our scenario and facilitated our exercise today. They should be commended for their hard work.”

Representatives from *your county name* County include; *insert names here*

The North Central Region Bioterrorism Committee is part of statewide effort coordinated by the Arkansas Department of Health and the Arkansas Hospital Association. The state is divided into seven regions and each of those regions is responsible for development of a regional disaster preparedness plan. The North Central Region Bioterrorism Committee is a coordinated effort between, hospitals, local and state governments, emergency response agencies and the private sector to ensure that North Central Arkansas can adequately respond to a crisis.