

§ 130A-485. Vaccination program established; definitions.

(a) The Department and local health departments shall offer a vaccination program for first responders who may be exposed to infectious diseases when deployed to disaster locations. The vaccinations shall include, but are not limited to, hepatitis A vaccination, hepatitis B vaccination, diphtheria-tetanus vaccination, influenza vaccination, pneumococcal vaccination, and other vaccinations when recommended by the United States Public Health Service and in accordance with Federal Emergency Management Directors Policy. Immune globulin will be made available when necessary, as determined by the State Health Director.

(b) Participation in the vaccination program is voluntary by the first responders, except for first responders who are classified as having "occupational exposure" to bloodborne pathogens as defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Standard contained at 29 C.F.R. § 1910.10300 who shall be required to take the designated vaccinations or otherwise required by law.

(c) Nothing in this section shall require first responders, except first responders for whom the vaccination program is not voluntary as set forth in subsection (b) of this section, who present a written statement from a licensed physician indicating that a vaccine is medically contraindicated for the first responder or who sign a written statement that the administration of a vaccination conflicts with the first responder's religious tenets, to receive a vaccine.

(d) In the event of a vaccine shortage, the State Public Health Director, in consultation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shall give priority for vaccination to first responders deployed to a disaster location.

(e) The Department shall notify first responders of the availability of the vaccination program and shall provide educational materials on ways to prevent exposure to infectious diseases.

(f) As used in this section, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the term:

- (1) "Bioterrorism" means the intentional use of any microorganism, virus, infectious substance, biological product, or biological agent as defined in G.S. 130A-479 that may be engineered as a result of biotechnology or any naturally occurring or bioengineered component of any microorganism, virus, infectious substance, or biological product to cause or attempt to cause death, disease, or other biological malfunction in any living organism.
- (2) "Disaster location" means any geographical location where a bioterrorism attack, terrorist incident, catastrophic or natural disaster, or emergency occurs.
- (3) "First responders" means State and local law enforcement personnel, fire department personnel, and emergency medical personnel who will be deployed to bioterrorism attacks, terrorist attacks, catastrophic or natural disasters, or emergencies. (2003-227, s. 1.)