

ANDREW J. SPANO, Westchester County Executive

SUSAN TOLCHIN, Director of Communications

**CONTACT: SUSAN TOLCHIN
VICTORIA HOCHMAN**

(914) 995-2932

(914) 995-2950

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WESTCHESTER DEVELOPING SMALLPOX PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Spano to meet with school, local officials, emergency and hospital personnel to discuss smallpox threat

Westchester County Executive Andy Spano, Health Commissioner Josh Lipsman and Deputy Emergency Services Commissioner Anthony Sutton will meet with school, municipal, emergency and hospital personnel to discuss plans for preventing and or dealing with a smallpox threat.

Spano will speak with officials Friday, Dec. 13 **at 8:30 a.m.** at the Westchester County Center in White Plains.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the NYS Health Department are developing guidelines on how to deal with the threat of smallpox, which could include mass vaccinations.

Westchester County will be responsible for carrying out these plans and is seeking assistance from local municipalities, schools and emergency personnel. The meeting will focus on developing points of distribution for the vaccination as well as discussing the impact of the impending federal and state guidelines.

“It’s important that we form a partnership early on with local schools and municipalities so we are all on the same page when it comes to protecting the public,” said Spano. “When the federal and state governments issue their final guidelines, we want to be ready to implement them with the help of our partners.”

He added, “I anticipate this will be the first of a series of meetings so that officials, responders, the health community and the public will be continuously updated.”

Smallpox is just one of several issues that are part of an all-hazards emergency plan being developed at Spano’s direction. The ambitious blueprint mapped out by the health department and the Department of Emergency Services will serve to coordinate public health emergency preparedness in the county.

Last month, Spano announced the county’s plans to spend nearly \$2 million in federal and state funds to prepare for a possible incident of bioterrorism.