

# **INDIANA COALITION HELPS "CONNECT THE DOTS" IN FIGHT AGAINST BIOTERRORISM**

**HUDSON INSTITUTE, BRACKEN FOSTER & ASSOCIATES, INDIANA TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIP, INDIANA'S HEALTH INDUSTRY, and CVS CREATE WEB SERVICE TO DETECT POSSIBLE "BIO-ATTACK."**

For More Information Contact: Daniel Miller, (317) 733-3002 ,[dmiller@wiredworld1.com](mailto:dmiller@wiredworld1.com)

**September 4, 2002. INDIANAPOLIS, IN.** A coalition of private and not-for-profit organizations in Indiana have joined forces to create BIOSENTINEL™ — an interactive web service that provides biosurveillance, early detection, immediate notification, and emergency response coordination in the event of a bioterrorist assault. BIOSENTINEL is now available for statewide rollout.

BIOSENTINEL was developed by Hudson Institute, Bracken Foster & Associates, the Indiana Technology Partnership, Indiana's Health Industry, and CVS to address the very real need of early detection and warning of a possible bioterrorist attack and the required coordination of "first responders" including government, emergency support agencies, and health care professionals.

The genesis of BIOSENTINEL stems from a presentation on the threat of bioterrorism by Dr. Sarah Archer (a Hudson Institute Visiting Fellow and consultant to the U.S. Military). "It was evident after Dr. Archer's talk that the events of 9-11 should be viewed as a wake-up call, accentuating the need for many new products that were crucially important but that simply didn't yet exist," said Todd Bracken, CEO of Bracken Foster & Associates. "Fortunately, the seminar had brought together people with the skills, knowledge, and contacts needed to seriously address the problem of bioterrorism and biosurveillance."

Jim Wheeler, President of the Indiana Technology Partnership and a former Senior Fellow at Hudson Institute, suggested that, since many of the early symptoms of bioterrorist pathogens mimic flu-like symptoms, tracking select categories of medications designed to address those symptoms might be a key to early detection of a bioterrorist attack. "When it comes to bioterrorism," said Wheeler, "forewarned is forearmed."

Early in the project, the "Bioterrorism Solutions Group" (as the participating members called themselves) found a valuable partner in CVS/pharmacies. "When approached with the opportunity to join forces, CVS immediately saw the potential value and agreed to help us address this aspect of homeland security," said Todd Bracken.

Not only does the BIOSENTINEL system track peaks in sales of certain OTC medications, it also provides an early warning mechanism by zip code, and an emergency response coordination mechanism that simultaneously alerts all appropriate authorities and organizations tasked with proactive intervention and diagnostics.

BIOSENTINEL is designed to make it easy for additional pharmacies, grocery stores, and discounters throughout the nation to participate in the project. CVS was only the first among other retailers expected to join the effort in the coming months. "Our engineered methods of data exchange were specifically designed to address the potential concerns of our retail partners. We have simplified implementation and are able to process the data without raising concerns about proprietary information," said Bracken.

"Indiana is showing the nation how the private and not-for-profit communities can get together and develop ways to leverage existing information to meet an urgent new need," said Peter Beering, an Indianapolis-based Terrorism Expert.

"Recent events have reinforced the importance of early detection. Anything being done to protect our country and to head-off 'worst case scenarios' should be applauded," said Stephen Robertson, Director, Emergency Management Division, City of Indianapolis.

More detailed information on BIOSENTINEL can be found at [www.biosentinel.net](http://www.biosentinel.net).