

## FDNY and Terrorism Preparedness Taskforce Meet to Discuss Critical Preparedness Issues

By Kate Frucher,

Special Assistant to the Fire Commissioner

The FDNY Terrorism Preparedness Taskforce met with Commissioner Scoppetta, Chief of Department Frank Cruthers, Chief of Operations Salvatore Cassano, and other senior FDNY personnel in early February to discuss three significant initiatives on which the Department is working: enhanced radio communications, incident command and control, and smallpox.

After being briefed on the Department's recent progress in these three critical areas, Taskforce members proposed a number of strategies. They recommended outside experts to help further enhance the communications network. They discussed new and innovative ways to approach the problems of interagency command and control at the scene of major incidents and suggested specific technology that would help the Department manage critical personnel information both at the scene and at headquarters. Lastly, they recommended smallpox vaccination experts, from the American and Israeli military, whose experience will provide a valuable perspective on an issue of vital importance to the Department and City.

The Taskforce is designed to ensure



Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg meets with members of the FDNY Terrorism Preparedness Taskforce to discuss ways to enhance the Department's preparedness.

that the Fire Department and the City can build upon the best expertise in the nation and the world as they move forward with preparedness initiatives. Its membership includes James Woolsey, former Director of the CIA; Chief Daniel Nigro, former Chief of the Department; Dr. Joshua Lederberg, Nobel laureate in Physiology; Dr. Margaret Hamburg, former New York City Commissioner of Health; Greg Canavan, nuclear physicist and advisor to the Defense Department;

Shabtai Shavit, former head of Israel's Mossad; and Dr. Martin Blazer, head of the Department of Medicine at NYU Hospital.

In the future, members of the Taskforce will continue to provide this critical national and global perspective, so that the Department may access those people and resources that can help us best prepare for challenges we never dreamed we would have to confront.

## FDNY-Led Interagency Smallpox Summit Helps City Agencies Learn From the Experts

The Fire Department led an interagency seminar on New York City's smallpox vaccination program on March 12, 2003. The seminar featured two experts recommended by the Department's Terrorism Preparedness Taskforce and was run in conjunction with the Greater New York Hospital Association, the Police Department, the Office of Emergency Management, and the Department of Health. Though in the past City agencies have not always attempted to solve problems in the most cooperative fashion, this meeting served as a precedent for working together on this and other critical initiatives.

Colonel John Grabenstein is Deputy Director for Military Vaccines and the principal designer of the Department of



Commissioner Scoppetta kicks off a meeting in which experts advised Chiefs from both Fire and EMS on FDNY's smallpox vaccination program.

Defense's Smallpox Response Plan and Smallpox Vaccination Program. Dr. Joshua Shemer served as Surgeon General

of the Israeli Defense Forces, is currently director of one of the largest HMO's in Israel, and has advised the Israeli parliament to vaccinate thousands of soldiers and first responders.

The experiences and insights of Colonel Grabenstein and Dr. Shemer, both of whom have first-hand experience with the two largest smallpox vaccination initiatives in recent history, provided

valuable national and global perspectives on an issue New York City has only recently begun to face.