

# MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS REVIEW

"Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities"

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER SERVING THE MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS UNITS OF IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI AND NEBRASKA

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## Upcoming Events

**Kansas MRC Coordinators Meeting.** July 2, 2009 in Topeka, KS 66612. Contact Sonia Jordan, Kansas Hospital and Volunteer Outreach Coordinator, at (785) 296-5201 or [sjordan@kdheks.gov](mailto:sjordan@kdheks.gov) for more information.

**NACCHO Annual Conference.** July 29-31, 2009 in Orlando, FL. For more information, visit <http://www.naccho.org/events/nacchoannual2009/index.cfm>.

**Human Services in Disasters Summit.** July 30-31, 2009 in Topeka, KS. Sponsored by the Kansas Division of Emergency Management. For more information, visit <https://ks.train.org/DesktopModules/eLearning/CourseDetails/CourseDetailsForm.aspx?tabid=96&courseid=1017864>.

**Missouri MRC/Public Health Volunteers Meeting.** August 4, 2009 in Jefferson City, MO 65102. Contact Sharlet Kern Howren, Missouri MRC/Volunteer Program Coordinator, at (573) 522-4098 or [sharlet.howren@dhss.mo.gov](mailto:sharlet.howren@dhss.mo.gov) for more information.



**2009 Region VII LEPC/TERC Emergency Planning and Response Conference.** August 6-9, 2009 in Kansas City, MO. Sponsored by EPA Region VII and FEMA Region VII. For more information, visit <http://www.marc.org/gti/lepc-terc>.

**2009 National Conference on Community Preparedness.** August 9-12, 2009 in Arlington, VA. Sponsored by FEMA's Community Preparedness Division and the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM). For more information, visit <http://www.iaem.com/NCCP2009.htm>.

**Faith-Based Organizations Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Workshop.** August 11, 2009 in Kansas City, MO. Sponsored by the Medical Reserve Corps of Greater Kansas City. For more information, contact Charlie Bryan, MRC Coordinator, at (816) 701-8334.

**IAEM 57th Annual Conference and EMEX 2009.** October 31-November 5, 2009 in Orlando, FL. Sponsored by the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM). For more information, visit <http://www.iaem.com/events/Annual/intro.htm>.

## Surgeon General Promotes Healthy Homes

Adapted from HHS/OPHS press release, June 9, 2009

On June 9, 2009, Acting Surgeon General Steven K. Galson, MD, MPH issued *The Surgeon General's Call to Action To Promote Healthy Homes* at a press conference at the National Building Museum in Washington D.C. The Call to Action looks at the ways housing can affect health; its release will initiate a national dialogue about the importance of healthy homes.

According to RADM Galson, "The home is the centerpiece of American life." "We can prevent many diseases and injuries that result from health hazards in the home by following the simple steps outlined in this Call to Action," said RADM Galson.

Some examples outlined in the Call to Action include preventing falls by taking measures such as installing grab bars in showers and preparing a fire escape plan. Falls are the leading cause of injury deaths among older adults.

Other steps outlined in the Call to Action include:

- Checking gas appliances, fireplaces, chimneys, and furnaces yearly and changing furnace and air conditioning filters regularly.
- Keeping children safe from drowning, lead poisoning, suffocation, strangulation, and other hazards.
- Improving air quality in homes by installing radon and carbon monoxide detectors, eliminating smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke, and controlling allergens that contribute to asthma and mold growth.
- Improving water quality by learning to protect and maintain private water wells.

RADM Galson urged everyone from parents and homebuilders to community leaders and policy makers to embrace the holistic approach to creating healthy homes outlined in the Call to Action.

During the event, Ron Sims, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), also announced the release of HUD's Healthy Homes Strategic Plan. HUD's plan demonstrates why healthy homes is a national priority, describes what steps should be taken to achieve healthier housing, and highlights the key public and private partners for implementation.

"We are pleased that we are able to release our strategic plan to the nation today," Secretary Sims said. "We must continue to work together across communities and the nation to ensure our homes are sited, designed, built, renovated, and maintained in ways that support the health of residents."

The Call to Action outlines the next steps of a society-wide approach to healthy homes that will result in the greatest possible public health impact and reduction of disparities in the availability of healthy, safe, affordable, accessible, and environmentally friendly homes.

- Individuals can make their homes healthy and more environmentally friendly by improving air quality, safely using household products, properly using safety devices, adequately supervising children, and abating the use of toxic chemicals.
- Organizations can educate at-risk populations about the connection between health and housing, and identifying and addressing home deficiencies.
- Healthcare providers can incorporate healthy housing solutions into their protocols.
- Government can help create homes that are affordable and improve people's health. Adequate supplies of affordable housing must be made available in order for healthy homes to be achieved.

According to Dr. Howard Frumkin, Director of CDC's National Center for Environmental Health and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, "Good health begins at home. Home is the place that most families connect, talk, and make decisions about their health. Ensuring that the nation's homes are safe, healthy, affordable, accessible and environmentally friendly will have a direct, immediate and measurable effect on the health of the nation."

The Call to Action also highlights the need for research that links housing conditions with specific health outcomes and that highlights the impact of disparate access to safe, healthy, affordable, and accessible homes. The outcomes of this research should result in tangible improvements to people's lives by translating practice into policy.

The release of this document is part of a larger Healthy Homes Initiative led by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the U.S. Department of Housing and

Urban Development with support from such organizations as the National Center for Healthy Housing, the Alliance for Healthy Homes, and the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning.

Please visit <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov> for more healthy home information, to download *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Healthy Homes*, or to listen to a podcast from the Acting Surgeon General.

### 2009 Integrated Training Summit Photos Available

The MRC photographs taken by the professional photographer at the 2009 Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness and Response Training Summit are now available on the Summit's website. The link to go directly to the photographs is [HHS Training Summit](#). These photographs are also available on the MRC website at the following link: <http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/PhotoGallery>. MRC unit leaders are encouraged to view and use the photographs for unit newsletters, presentations, or other promotions.

### New Federal Deployment Section of MRC Website

The Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps (OCVMRC) is pleased to announce a new section has been added to the MRC website highlighting the Federal deployment of MRC volunteers. The new deployment page can be found at <http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/MRCDeployment>.

Also, this information can be accessed by clicking on the blue "MRC Deployment" tab found on the left hand side of the MRC home page. The OCVMRC has posted a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section, as well as photos of MRC deployment training courses. The OCVMRC is planning to add many more resources in the near future.

Unit leaders and MRC volunteers who are interested in Federal deployment should familiarize themselves with the FAQ. For more information, or to express interest in MRC deployment operations, please contact [MRCDeployment@hhs.gov](mailto:MRCDeployment@hhs.gov).

### FEMA Research Provides Insights on Personal Preparedness

Adapted from FEMA e-mail of June 11, 2009 and the Citizen Corps website

Two reports produced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), *Personal Preparedness in America: Findings from the Citizen Corps National Survey* and the *Citizen Corps Urban Area Survey*, offer comprehensive data on the public's thoughts, perceptions, and behaviors related to preparedness and community safety for multiple types of hazards. The results, which come from 2,400 household surveys fielded in the fall of 2007, provide insight on preparedness in the U.S. FEMA is conducting the survey again this year with more in-depth sampling across the U.S.; results for the 2009 survey will be available later this summer.

Key findings from the survey include:

- 53% of respondents have supplies set aside at home.
- 42% of respondents have a household disaster plan.
- Too many Americans don't know how to get critical information or where to go in the event of a disaster.
  - 60% of respondents were unfamiliar with their local evacuation routes.
  - 54% of respondents were unfamiliar with their local shelter locations.
- The type of disaster makes a difference to an individual's perceived ability to respond.
  - Individuals felt the most confident in their ability to respond in the first minutes of a natural disaster and least confident in their ability in the event of an explosion of a radiological or "dirty" bomb.
- 71% of respondents expect to rely heavily on household members and 57% expect to rely on fire, police or emergency personnel in the first 72 hours following a disaster.
- Only 37% of respondents think a natural disaster will ever affect their community; less than 1 in 5 for an act of terrorism.
- 37% of respondents reported that a primary reason for not preparing is that they believe emergency responders will help them.
- Few respondents believe they can handle situations without preparation.

- 78% of respondents believe preparation, planning, and emergency supplies will help them handle a natural disaster.
- However, almost 4 in 10 felt preparations would not make a difference.
- 32% of respondents reported being prepared for at least the past 6 months, while 27% are not planning to do anything about preparing.

According to FEMA, the following recommendations may assist researchers and practitioners in increasing personal preparedness, civic engagement, and community resilience:

- An awareness of vulnerabilities to natural disasters motivates individuals to prepare. Most individuals, however, did not believe their communities will ever be affected by any type of disaster.
- Perceptions of the utility of preparedness and confidence in ability to respond varied significantly by type of hazard. Because all-hazards messaging may dilute critical differences in preparedness and response protocols, preparedness and response education should include a focus on hazard-specific actions appropriate for each community.
- Individuals' high expectations of assistance from emergency responders may inhibit individual preparedness. Communicating more realistic expectations and personal responsibilities is critical.
- Social networks, such as households, neighborhoods, the workplace, schools, and faith communities, and the concepts of mutual support, should be emphasized.
- Too few people had stocked disaster supplies, and most supplies were incomplete. More emphasis is needed on the importance of stocking disaster supplies in multiple locations, and more specificity is needed on critical items to include, such as flashlights, radios, batteries, first aid kits, and personal documents.
- Greater appreciation for the importance of household plans and knowledge of local emergency response organizations' procedures and resources is needed. Individuals who reported being prepared lacked critical plans and information.
- Practicing response protocols is critical for effective execution. Greater emphasis on drills and exercises is needed.

- Focusing on individuals in the contemplation stage for personal preparedness may yield greater results. Messaging and community outreach efforts should be designed to support those already considering taking action.
- Individuals' strong interest in attending training courses and volunteering should be harnessed through social networks. Training and volunteer service should be linked with a responsibility for educating and encouraging others to prepare.
- Specific socio-demographic characteristics correlated with attitudes toward and actions for preparedness. Insights into these differences offer the ability to tailor outreach efforts to targeted audiences.
- Residents in urban areas appeared to be least engaged in preparedness activities. With the added vulnerabilities of dense population centers, urban areas should be a targeted focus of preparedness outreach efforts.
- Individuals believed they had a personal responsibility to report suspicious behavior, but greater collaboration between citizens and law enforcement is needed.

The reports from the survey are available at [http://www.citizencorps.gov/news/press/2009/personal\\_preparedness\\_research\\_jun09.shtm](http://www.citizencorps.gov/news/press/2009/personal_preparedness_research_jun09.shtm).

### **\$1.8 Billion in FY09 FEMA Preparedness Grants Available**

On June 16, 2009, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced nearly \$1.8 billion in Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) grants. The grant program allocation includes:

- State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) – \$861.1 million.
- Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) – \$798.6 million.
- Metropolitan Medical Response System Program (MMRS) – \$39.8 million capabilities.
- Citizen Corps Program (CCP) – \$14.6 million.
- State Homeland Security Program Tribal (SHSP Tribal) – \$1.7 million.
- Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) – \$15 million.
- Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program (RCPGP) – \$34 million.

See <http://www.fema.gov/grants> for additional information on FEMA grant programs.