

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

4th Annual Public Health Volunteers Symposium.

July 31, 2008 in Columbia, MO. Sponsored by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). For more information, contact Sharlet Howren, DHSS, at sharlet.howren@dhss.mo.gov.

Nebraska MRC Consortium Meeting. August 6, 2008 in Kearney, NE. Hosted by the Central Nebraska MRC. For more information, contact Melanie Hooks, Southeast Nebraska MRC, at emergcoord@volunteerpartners.org or (402) 435-2100.

New Madrid Seismic Zone Conference. August 12-14, 2008 in Rolla, MO. Sponsored by the U.S. Geological Survey, Missouri University of Science and Technology, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Missouri State Emergency Management Agency and the Society of American Military Engineers. For more information, visit <http://conference.mst.edu/newmadridconf/>.

Kansas MRC Meeting. August 15, 2008 in Topeka, KS. Hosted by the Shawnee County MRC. For more information, contact Gary Brown, Regional MRC Coordinator, at (816) 426-2829 or gary.brown@hhs.gov.

2008 ASTHO-NACCHO Joint Conference. September 9-12, 2008 in Sacramento, CA. Sponsored by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). For more information, visit <http://www.naccho.org/events/asthonaccho2008/>.

2008 Iowa Governor's Homeland Security Conference. September 30-October 1, 2008 in Des Moines, IA. Sponsored by the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division. For more information, visit <http://www.iowahomelandsecurity.org/Home/GovernorsHomelandSecurityConference/tabid/173/Default.aspx>.

Regions VII and VIII MRC Conference. October 2-3, 2008 in Kansas City, KS. Sponsored by the Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps, Regions VII and VIII. For more information, contact Gary Brown, Regional MRC Coordinator, at (816) 426-2829 or gary.brown@hhs.gov.

IAEM 56th Annual Conference and EMEX. November 15-20, 2008 in Overland Park, KS. Sponsored by the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM). For more information, visit <http://www.iaem.com/events/annual/intro.htm>.

Save the Date!

Save the Date! The Region VII and VIII MRC conference will be held on October 2-3, 2008 at the Great Wolf Lodge adjacent to The Legends at Village West in Kansas City, KS. This year, MRC leaders from Region VII (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska) will join their colleagues from Region VIII (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming) to network and share valuable information that can be applied to their respective local MRC units.

This two day training, leadership and networking conference will include an array of topics in public health, emergency preparedness and response, volunteer management and other areas of interest to MRC units.

Like previous regional and national conferences, hotel accommodations for participants will be covered by NACCHO. For information on the Great Wolf Lodge Kansas City, see www.greatwolfodge.com. This hotel is immediately adjacent to The Legends at Village West, one of the Kansas City metropolitan area's newest shopping, dining and entertainment areas. Information on The Legends at Village West is available at www.legendsshopping.com.

Online registration for the conference will be available soon. For more information on the conference, contact Gary Brown, Regional MRC Coordinator, at (816) 426-2829 or gary.brown@hhs.gov.

Free eCDLS Course Available to MRC Members

The American Medical Association (AMA) Center for Public Health Preparedness & Disaster Response and the National Disaster Life Support (NDLS) Foundation are offering a free online Core Disaster Life Support (CDLS) training course to MRC members. CDLS is a nationally recognized all-hazards course designed to increase emergency responder awareness of basic skills, competencies, knowledge and resources critical for a coordinated and effective local emergency response effort. The electronic version of this course, eCDLS, gives first responders the flexibility to access this training at their convenience.

eCDLS addresses issues of paramount importance across first responder disciplines: the fire service, law enforcement, emergency management, EMS, public health, healthcare, public safety communications,

governmental administration, hazardous materials, and public works. The course comprises nine modules, a pre-test and a post-test.

The course is funded and approved through a grant from DHS. eCDLS students who complete the free course by September 30, 2008 will receive a CDLS course manual, the AMA virtual library CD-ROM, *Responding to Public Health Emergencies*, and a CDLS wallet card. These materials are not required to complete the course.

The eCDLS course is available through MRC-TRAIN at <https://www.mrc.train.org>; the course ID is 1012300 (this will take you into the site where the course is hosted: <http://www.ncbrt.lsu.edu/elearn>, where students must first register and then receive a password via e-mail to access the course).

Transitions with the Shawnee County MRC

This summer brings transitions to the Shawnee County, KS MRC. After five years, Tisha Sinclair will be leaving her position as the unit coordinator for the Shawnee County MRC to be what she calls a "work-at-home" mom. She will also become a volunteer in the MRC unit she helped create. Tisha is the longest-serving MRC coordinator in Region VII, and one of the longest-serving MRC coordinators in the country. The Shawnee County MRC was one of the original 42 MRC units established as part of the initial MRC demonstration project in 2002. Under Tisha's leadership, the Shawnee County MRC went from being a concept to being a model MRC unit. The knowledge and work products she shared helped lay the foundations for many MRC units in the region. Tisha will be greatly missed, and the MRC coordinators of Region VII and the staff of the Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps wish her all the best!

As we say goodbye to Tisha Sinclair, we also welcome Don Jenkins, the new unit coordinator for the Shawnee County MRC. Don began work at the Shawnee County Health Agency on June 16th as the Emergency Preparedness and Community Outreach Specialist. He brings to his new position 16 years of experience in emergency preparedness, business contingency planning and security operations for Westar Energy. He also spent two years working for Norfolk Southern, Inc. as an Operations Supervisor overseeing safety.

Thank you, Tisha, for your service to your community, the State of Kansas, and the nation. And Don, welcome to the MRC program and the network of MRC units in Region VII.

ASTHO Issues Report on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness for At-Risk Populations

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) has issued a report entitled, "At-Risk Populations and Influenza Pandemic: Planning Guidance for State, Territorial, Tribal and Local Health Departments." This document addresses a variety of topics regarding pandemic preparedness and response for at-risk populations, including:

- Ethical and legal considerations
- Collaboration with and engagement of at-risk populations
- Identifying and mapping at-risk populations in a community
- Communications with and education of at-risk populations
- Provision of clinical and non-clinical services to at-risk populations in an influenza pandemic
- How to exercise, evaluate and improve preparedness of at-risk populations

Each chapter of the report also provides recommended planning activities and sample tools and best practices. This report is available from ASTHO at: www.astho.org/pubs/ASTHO_ARPP_Guidance_June3008.pdf.

AHRQ Offers Guidance on Home Health Care During an Influenza Pandemic

Adapted from AHRQ press release of July 8, 2008

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), in collaboration with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), has also developed a new resource on pandemic influenza preparedness. AHRQ's *Home Health Care During an Influenza Pandemic: Issues and Resources* identifies home health care as a critical component in providing care during a pandemic influenza event and provides resources to home health care providers and community planners to prepare for such an event.

The report states that home health care agencies already provide routine care for acute and chronically ill, permanently disabled and terminally ill patients. According to the report, on any given day, there are three times as many patients in home health care settings as there are in hospitals. AHRQ Director

Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D. states, "To date, there has been little information about how home health providers could meet a sudden demand for services during a public health emergency, although it is extremely likely that these agencies would be called on to provide additional services at a time of need." Dr. Clancy goes on to say, "This report offers practical advice and potential strategies to ensure that home health care can meet emergency demands and continue to provide safe, high-quality care."

The report emphasizes the home health care sector's potential to help handle a surge in patients during a biologic event and stresses the need for involvement of home health care agencies in advance planning and coordination at the local level. It offers resources and suggestions on addressing key elements of home health care preparedness and includes lists of existing tools and models throughout. Examples of issues and strategies addressed in the report include:

- Exploring the use of technology to monitor patients at a distance
- Collaboration with community partners
- Legal and ethical considerations of providing care under emergency conditions
- Home health care workforce issues, including training
- Recommendations for additional action and research at the Federal, State and local levels.

According to RADM W. Craig Vanderwagen, M.D., HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, "Community planners, state and local public health departments and health care systems must look critically at leveraging the existing resources of home health care agencies to meet the possible surge demands of an influenza pandemic." "Home health care agencies, community-based service providers and area agencies on aging are an essential fabric of our communities," added Josefina G. Carbonell, HHS Assistant Secretary for Aging. "The services they provide are already necessary for home and community living for more than 10.4 million older adults and their caregivers. A pandemic will increase the need for these services and provide challenges to their delivery."

This report is based on the findings of an expert panel meeting, including representatives of home health care, emergency and disaster planning, professional organizations and federal and state government agencies. The report is available from AHRQ online at <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/healthcare/homehealth.html>.