

Summer 2011

This Issue:

- ★ South-Central Missouri MRC Travels to Joplin After Tornado
- ★ National Notes
- ★ Selma-Dallas County MRC Helps Tornado Survivors
- ★ TMRC Partners with Air National Guard for Earthquake Response Exercise
- ★ MRC Spotlights
- ★ Mountain Regional MRC Deploys to Disaster Areas
- ★ NACCHO MRC Project Director Travels to Iowa
- ★ Operation Volusia Virus
- ★ Managing Conferences Through MRC-TRAIN
- ★ News from NACCHO
- ★ Nassau County Department of Health MRC Participates in SNS Training
- ★ NACCHO Resources
- ★ Preparedness Starts With You!
- ★ A Look Ahead

South-Central Missouri MRC Travels to Joplin After Tornado

On May 22, the city of Joplin, MO, experienced a category EF5 tornado that ripped the town to pieces. More than 150 people died and more than 900 people were injured, and thousands of structures including houses and businesses were blown away or flattened. President Barack Obama declared Joplin a Federal disaster area on May 24.

On May 27, local health departments and the South-Central Missouri MRC received a request from the Jasper-Joplin County Health Department to canvass neighborhoods in the city that were heavily damaged by the tornado. The health department wanted to find individuals needing tetanus shots, which are necessary to protect against infection and minimize the number of deaths and hospitalizations.

South-Central Missouri MRC coordinator Beverly Stewart says, “Once we traveled out into the neighborhoods there was an enormous amount of destruction. One neighborhood we came upon appeared, at first glance, to have moderate damage and to still be

inhabited. However, once we left our vehicle to search for individuals who might want and need tetanus vaccinations, we found that the homes had more major damage and were not inhabited at all. The individuals present were insurance adjusters, home owners, construction crews, and other volunteers removing debris.”

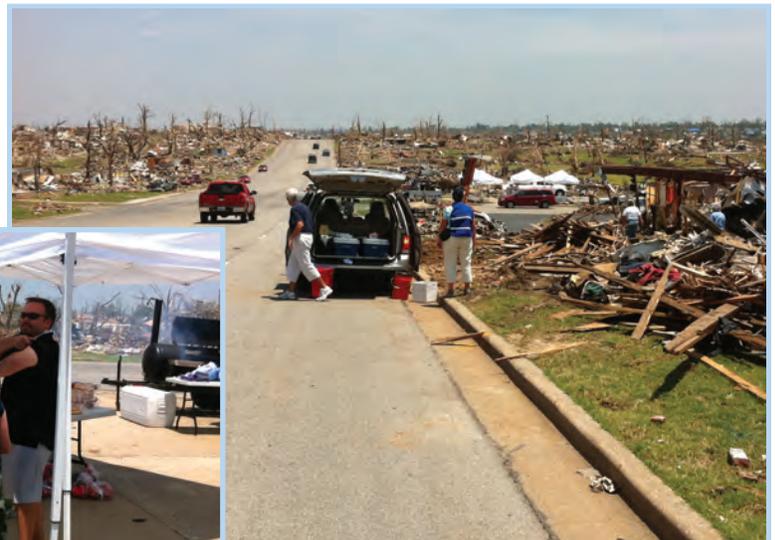
Six MRC volunteers (non-medical and medical) assisted with tetanus vaccination efforts on June 3 and provided 72 volunteer hours. Individuals were immunized onsite from the health department van. The health departments provided more than 13,644 tetanus vaccinations between May 28 and June 3. Three MRC nurses administered 75 tetanus vaccinations on June 3.

“More than 150 people died and more than 900 people were injured...”

Stewart says that it was a very rewarding experience for the MRC. The unit helped increase the percentage of residents who are vaccinated for tetanus, and unit volunteers listened to grateful patients say how blessed they felt in the midst of major destruction and trauma, thanks to the generosity of strangers who donated their time to help others. ★

MRC nurses arrived with tetanus vaccinations needed to immunize volunteers who were clearing debris.

MRC nurses immunized a volunteer from Alabama while an MRC volunteer coordinator assisted with paperwork.



National Notes



Dear MRC Leaders and Volunteers,

National Preparedness Month provides an opportunity for all of us to take time to participate in activities and events that help to make our communities—and the nation—safer and ready for any type of emergency event. This September, National Preparedness Month will also mark the 10-year anniversary

of the September 11th attacks. We should remember those who lost their lives, and note how the tragic events of that day served as a catalyst for all of us to see the importance of being prepared and taking better care of our communities.

The responses to the 9/11 attacks, as well the subsequent anthrax attacks, clearly identified the need for a group of dedicated local volunteers to support public health emergency response efforts and improve the health and safety of their communities. Thus, the Medical Reserve Corps was “born” and we will be celebrating the 10-year anniversary of the MRC program in 2012.

We have seen the MRC program grow from a fledgling 42 units in 2002 to a now robust network of more than 950 units across the nation and over 200,000

volunteers. MRC units have recently responded to the needs of their communities by assisting with the H1N1 response, and providing support following natural disasters such as wildfires in New Mexico, floods in Minnesota and North Dakota, and tornadoes in Massachusetts, Alabama, and Missouri. MRC units meet the needs of their communities in many ways, and you can always find highlights of these activities in our quarterly reports and in each issue of *MRC ★ In Focus*.

In recognition and celebration of our 10-year anniversary, the Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps plans to commemorate the history and growth of the MRC by developing a 10-year “retrospective” report, and hosting an MRC anniversary event.

It is because of what you do every day that we are able to celebrate 10 years of the MRC. Thank you! You give your time to train, prepare, and respond to the needs of your community. It is because of you that your communities are safer, healthier, and more resilient. ★

Warmest Regards,

//CAPT Rob Tosatto//

CAPT Rob Tosatto
Director
Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps

Selma-Dallas County MRC Helps Tornado Survivors

On April 27, a category EF5 tornado touched down in Hackleburg, AL, causing mayhem and destruction to the area. Every structure in the town was destroyed except for a bank and water tower. More than 20 people lost their lives, many were injured, and hundreds were left homeless.

On May 1, the Selma-Dallas County (AL) MRC received a phone call from the Alabama Department of Public Health Disaster Preparedness requesting the MRC unit’s mobile medical unit. The only medical clinic of Dr. Morrow in Hackleburg was destroyed, and medical supplies and services were desperately needed.

The Selma-Dallas County MRC mobile unit came equipped with medical supplies such as laceration kits, ice packs, digital thermometers, assorted bandages, a Complete Blood Count machine, a 5000-watt generator, and a generator with enough fuel to operate for approximately 48 hours. The mobile unit was stationed in the town next to the ruins of the old medical clinic

for 2 months. As of July 12, the unit was still in Hackleburg, operating under 70 days of deployment.

The MRC unit and Dr. Morrow’s staff used the mobile unit to care for patients and provide medical services to first responders and volunteers who were injured during cleanup operations. Prior to this event, the Selma-Dallas County MRC had not volunteered in a disaster area that was so severely affected. MRC unit coordinator Jeff Cothran says that the unit volunteers are “thankful that we were able to help in any way with the recovery of the community affected by the tornadoes.” ★



The Selma-Dallas County MRC Mobile Unit.

TMRC Partners with Air National Guard for Earthquake Response Exercise

The Tristate MRC (TMRC) is a regional coalition of volunteers based in the greater Cincinnati area and includes volunteers from Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. The volunteers have been developing consistent plans, policies, resources, and trainings so that volunteers from any unit in the region can work together seamlessly during an emergency.

On May 18, the TMRC participated in the National Level Exercise 2011, which included triage, support, and transportation of simulated victims from an earthquake-stricken area. TMRC's region is in proximity to the New Madrid Seismic Zone, an area that has experienced large earthquakes in the past and remains at risk for producing future earthquakes. The exercise included the movement of earthquake victims from the Missouri area to Cincinnati via an Air National Guard airplane.

This exercise was conducted as part of the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), which moves patients from disaster-affected areas into neighboring, unaffected areas for medical care during an emergency. Approximately, 25 TMRC volunteers participated in the exercise in several different response roles as part of overall Patient Reception Center operations. Volunteers participated as litter carriers and transported patients from the airplane to the hangar for triage. Medically trained volunteers performed triage and provided medical care to the victims, while other volunteers collected patient data and assisted in assigning patients

to hospitals in the region. Other agencies participated in the exercise, including the Greater Cincinnati Chapter of the American Red Cross, local emergency medical services agencies, the Air National Guard, and the Department of Veterans Affairs Hospital (the lead agency in the exercise).

TMRC Regional Director Jared Warner explains that with about 3,000 MRC volunteers, it is difficult to determine which specific group of volunteers will be sent to respond to an emergency when a call for NDMS volunteers occurs. However, both leaders of NDMS and TMRC are addressing this issue by creating just-in-time materials for volunteers.

Warner says, "The NDMS exercise provided an opportunity to showcase the outstanding work completed by the TMRC in the development of a regional coalition of local and regional volunteer groups. Currently, the TMRC is working with local agencies and NDMS to further strengthen its role as a reliable, trained, and effective emergency staffing resource for the community." ★



Volunteers transported patients to an Air National Guard airplane.

MRC volunteers at the exercise.



MRC Spotlights

Volunteer

Fran Becker has been a volunteer with the Kauai MRC (HI) since 2007. She served as an advisory member when the unit was formed, an experience that gave her insight into the unit's mission and prompted her to become a volunteer. Fran volunteers for many worthwhile causes, but her efforts with the MRC are especially significant because it ties into her work of recruiting students for health and wellness careers. This combined experience allowed her to assist with the creation of the Kauai Junior MRC. In addition, Fran is a trainer for the Kauai MRC's new member orientation and a train-the-trainer for the unit's hearing and vision screening component. Her unit leader describes her as a tireless worker who displays quiet leadership and is available for any MRC event.



Kauai MRC volunteer Fran Becker at an MRC event.

Unit

The Village of New Lenox MRC (IL) has been active in a variety of public health, preparedness, and response activities to support its community since it was formed in August 2010. The unit has collaborated with local response partners and other organizations to provide volunteers with frequent opportunities to interact with various community partners prior to an emergency. Some of the unit's activities include participating in the wilderness and remote first aid class with Citizen Corps, American Red Cross, and the New Lenox Safe Communities America Coalition; staffing a shelter with first responders during a winter storm; supporting a local blood drive where volunteers assisted a donor who lost consciousness; and providing support to special needs individuals during an event at a local carnival. ★

Mountain Regional MRC Deploys to Disaster Areas

In May, the Asheville (NC) Mountain Area Chapter of the American Red Cross (ARC) received a request to deploy to the Mississippi River flood disaster in Memphis, TN. Peggy Handon, the North Carolina MRC State Coordinator, notified MRC unit coordinators that the ARC needed additional volunteers. As a result, in May and June, several Mountain Regional MRC (NC) volunteers who are also ARC volunteers were deployed to disaster areas in Alabama, Louisiana, Massachusetts, and Tennessee.

Judy Hughes, RN, deployed to Birmingham, AL, to contribute to relief efforts in response to tornadoes that devastated the state in April. Hughes worked with the Integrated Care Team at the city's ARC headquarters for 2 weeks and provided client casework and disaster health services. She provided aid to the families of 6 fatalities and visited the seriously injured and their families. Hughes says, "In Hale County (AL), the tornado literally obliterated Sawyerville...The disaster aid distribution centers (and places to apply for assistance) were located some 20 or more miles away, and the majority of people that I saw needing such assistance had no way to get there to apply for it."

Pat Gill, RN, was deployed to Memphis and Baton Rouge, LA, to assist with flood relief efforts. Gill worked at the local ARC headquarters in both cities. In Memphis, approximately 28 patients were seen at the shelter; in Baton Rouge, Gill served as a staff health nurse on call.

Jan Lounsbury, RN, deployed to Memphis and assisted the ARC nurses with outreach and organizing medical supplies to be sent to shelters. Lounsbury assisted with replacing lost items (e.g., medication, glasses) and provided backpacks containing supplies such as blankets and first aid kits as well as information regarding public health concerns (e.g., how to make water safe to drink after a flood).

In June, Hank Jaeger, an emergency medical technician, deployed to Springfield, MA, for 2 weeks to contribute to relief efforts after multiple tornadoes struck western and central Massachusetts. He treated 19 patients and served as part of a strike force team that provided mental health support, house repairs, food and water, and supplies to 150 people. Jaeger says, "We came across a graduation party being held at a residence that was completely demolished with the exception of the still standing garage. The party was held in the driveway with portable generators in use—that was sad." ★

NACCHO MRC Project Director Travels to Iowa

In June, Debra Robinson, National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) MRC Project Director, visited the Siouxland District Health Department and the Woodbury County MRC in Sioux City, IA. Robinson says that one of her goals is to take advantage of existing travel opportunities to meet with local health department and MRC representatives to observe how they are building capacity and community resiliency, the cornerstones of the Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps (OCVMRC) program. She added, "We often read or receive briefings about activities and services being provided by MRC volunteers at the local level, but have little opportunity to meet with the people who carry out their local missions, especially on their turf. I believe that local connection is vital to the work we do every day through the cooperative agreement with the OCVMRC. Leveraging our existing travel opportunities gives us a chance to meet and discuss issues from a local perspective without additional budget impacts."

A new unit, the Woodbury County MRC is in the process of responding to a major flooding event. Robinson says, "It was quite exciting to hear how a new organization is laying the foundation for its future while facing an ongoing local emergency. They are literally developing, testing, and validating some processes in a compressed timeframe during emergency conditions. In this case, lessons-learned should probably be renamed 'lessons-lived.'"

Like other units nationwide, the Woodbury County MRC is working with a centralized volunteer organization that helps match potential volunteer skills, needs, and interests with volunteer opportunities. The unit is currently helping support a local special needs registry, mass vaccination and distribution clinics, and shelters and hospital surge capabilities. In addition, the unit works with a local sister organization called the Volunteer Emergency Response Team, whose members also consist of medical and non-medical personnel and are only activated during an emergency situation. ★



Woodbury County MRC coordinator Angela Drent and Siouxland District Health Department Director Kevin Grieme display their certificates from NACCHO.

Operation Volusia Virus

Eleven Volusia County MRC (FL) volunteers participated in a 3-hour tabletop exercise on June 11. The exercise was designed to enhance the working knowledge of volunteers with the activation and management of an Alternative Medical Treatment Site (AMTS) in response to an outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in the region.

The Volusia County Division of Emergency Management and the Volusia County Health Department sponsored the exercise, which included a collaboration of agencies such as the Volusia County Emergency Operations Center and the county health department's environmental health staff. "This was a great opportunity for our members to experience first-hand the processes associated with establishing an Incident Command structure," says unit coordinator Susan MacKenzie.

During the exercise, MRC volunteers were assigned to various roles associated with setting up and running an AMTS. MacKenzie says, "From identifying resources that would be required to run an AMTS to developing

an incident action plan outlining various operational goals and objectives, the MRC was able to gain a much stronger understanding of what it takes to manage a health-related emergency."

The MRC has a 3-year plan to better prepare for the use of an AMTS and increase the complexity and community involvement during the next 2 years. The exercise provided an opportunity to identify new community partners that can assist in responding to future health emergencies within the county. MacKenzie



explains that an important focus of the exercise's improvement plan is to provide outreach to all community partners and help them have an understanding of the MRC's role during emergencies and disasters. ★

MRC volunteers (bottom to top): Jarrell McIntyre, Jamie Medina, and Sue McIlrath during the tabletop exercise.

Managing Conferences Through MRC-TRAIN

MRC-TRAIN (<http://www.mrc.train.org>) provides unit leaders with an opportunity to track volunteer training and education through an integrated Web-based system. In addition to Web- and classroom-based courses, conference events can be posted and managed on MRC-TRAIN.

The Conference module can be accessed by any user who obtains the Course Provider role, which allows unit leaders and select volunteers to post materials to MRC-TRAIN. Within this module, providers can set up multi-session conferences across different locations and days, if necessary. Attendance rosters can be made available for separate sessions, which can also have unique certificates and credit opportunities. The Conference module provides an integrated solution for unit leaders to manage volunteer training and education.

Meanwhile, volunteers can easily access conference information and register through the same Course Search on MRC-TRAIN where other training opportunities are displayed. In addition, conference attendance, including any credits and certificates earned, will appear in a volunteer's transcript with other training and education. ★

Additional MRC-TRAIN resources are available at:

MRC Web site

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/searchFldr/search?subSearch=TRAINResources>

MRC-TRAIN Web site

<https://www.mrc.train.org>

The MRC-TRAIN Support Desk

(mrcsupport@train.org) is available to provide assistance and field questions.

Remember, MRC-TRAIN is FREE (including many CEUs), available 24/7, and on track!

News from NACCHO

Health Reform

View NACCHO's summary of public health provisions and formation about health reform implementation, resources available for health departments, and upcoming opportunities for health departments to provide input into the regulatory process. To view this information, visit <http://www.naccho.org/advocacy/healthreform>.

Radiological Preparedness

Check out the latest in radiological preparedness by visiting NACCHO's radiation Web page, which contains reports, resources, tools, and articles related to radiation preparedness. For more information, visit <http://www.naccho.org/topics/radiation/>. ★

Nassau County Department of Health MRC Participates in SNS Training

The Nassau County Department of Health MRC (NY) falls under the direction of the county health department and it is one of the key agencies responsible for both developing and administering Nassau County's Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) plan.

Since the inception of this plan, the MRC leadership staff, which consists of MRC volunteers who take on additional responsibilities and formulate the Incident Command Structure for the unit, have been trained on how to prepare to accept and distribute the SNS. The MRC unit partners with other county agencies including the county office of emergency management, department of public works, police department, and department of health.

An annual training and review of the plan is held each year with all partners. The training encompasses a review of the SNS plan and educates volunteers on how to properly staff

the SNS warehouse with various jobs, such as a medicine inventory manager and medicine quality control coordinator. Volunteers are trained to assume any and all roles that can be better filled by a person with a medical background. The training also reviews the forms and job action sheets and enables volunteers to be better prepared to service a community during a potential deployment of SNS assets.

The MRC has proven to be a great advantage to the SNS plan because the MRC doctors and pharmacists can easily staff positions that require licensed professionals who are capable of accepting controlled substances. Nassau County Department of Health MRC coordinator Kevin O'Hara says, "Adding MRC volunteers to our (county health department) plan has enabled us to better utilize all staff and county workers, while at the same time having the best qualified staff working at the SNS site." ★

NACCHO Resources

NACCHO Supports Medical Reserve Corps Efforts Fact Sheet

NACCHO has prepared this fact sheet to help local public health professionals understand the shared cooperative agreement and unique relationship between OCVMRC and NACCHO, and the benefits that MRC units nationwide receive due to this dynamic partnership.

For more information, visit:

<http://eweb.naccho.org/prd/?NA397PDF>

Advanced Practice Center Products Support Medical Reserve Corps Initiatives Fact Sheet

NACCHO prepared this fact sheet to introduce MRC units to valuable training resources available through the Advanced Practice Centers (APC) Program. APCs exist to serve the public health community and provide resources ranging from training products developed to prepare for and respond to mass casualty incidents to public education materials developed to reach vulnerable populations. With public health resources stretched to the limit, the tasks of planning for and preparing to meet the needs of the community during a public health all-hazards event are daunting. A partnership among APCs, the MRC, and local health departments can create the tools necessary to leverage resources and assets with the goal of achieving efficient and effective responses and recovery from a disaster or public health emergency.

To view this fact sheet, visit:

<http://eweb.naccho.org/prd/?NA398PDF>

Follow
Us on
Twitter!



The Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps (OCVMRC) is now tweeting important info on hot topics, upcoming events, initiatives, MRC stories, and resources.

Follow us on Twitter to join the conversation. It's FREE, fast, and easy to sign up at www.twitter.com!

www.twitter.com/MRC_OSG

SAVE the DATE!

PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS
SUMMIT  **2012**

ANAHEIM FEBRUARY 21-24

www.phprep.org/2012

Preparedness Starts with You!

September is National Preparedness Month. With the recent East Coast earthquake and Hurricane Irene, we are further reminded why it is so important to be prepared for a disaster or emergency in our communities. Even if your community has not been affected by recent events, please keep in mind that emergencies and disasters can happen anytime and anywhere.

Ensure you and your loved ones are safe by making a plan and creating basic kits for your home, car, and workplace in the event you or your family must go several days without gas, water, electricity, and other public health utilities. During an emergency, access to supermarkets, banks, and other local services may not be possible.

Get a Kit. Make a Plan. Be Informed.

Be sure to visit <http://www.ready.gov> for information on various types of natural and man-made disasters, pet preparedness, translated resources, military family preparedness, how to create an emergency kit and emergency plan, and much more. In addition, a community and state database is available for residents looking for resources and information on preparedness in their community.

Also, make sure to promote preparedness by visiting <http://community.fema.gov/connect.ti/READYNPM> and becoming a National Preparedness Month Coalition member. The National Preparedness Month Coalition Web site serves as an organizing tool for preparedness resources and allows for members across the country to collaborate and share information on preparedness activities. Some of the resources available to members include the capability to post events, upload pictures, share lessons learned, and access preparedness media templates and messaging. The regional discussion feature is also a great opportunity for MRC units to discuss local issues tailored to their communities.

There are many ways that you can get involved in National Preparedness Month in your communities. Remember the difference between being a victim or a survivor is being prepared!

★ ★ ★ A Look Ahead ★ ★ ★

September

National Preparedness Month

National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month

National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month

11 National Day of Service

30 World Heart Day

October

Eye Injury Prevention Month

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

2–8 Mental Illness Awareness Week

November

American Diabetes Month

Lung Cancer Awareness Month

19 National Survivors of Suicide Day



We want to hear from you!

We need your help to make this newsletter informative, interesting, and beneficial to MRC units nationwide. We are always accepting stories and best practices on the MRC. As a reminder, stories with photos are more likely to be included. We look forward to your submissions.

Submittal Guidelines

- Please include contact information (e-mail and telephone number) for follow-up.
- If you include photos, please send as a high-resolution JPEG, TIF, or EPS attachment.
- Digital cameras should be set for a high-quality image using the maximum megapixel setting available.
- Photo submissions also should include a caption or description of the event.

For the upcoming newsletter..

We are specifically requesting stories on youth involvement in the MRC. *Please submit stories and photos by September 26, 2011 for consideration to mrcnewsletter@naccho.org.*

