

Summer 2010

Louisiana Community Responds to Oil Spill

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LTJG Katie Hager, Program Officer for the Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps, was invited to tour Plaquemines Parish, LA, with the Plaquemines Parish MRC Coordinator, Benny Puckett.

Plaquemines Parish MRC volunteers have been busy during the past five years. Most of the Parish population did not return after the area was hit by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and visible damage left by the storm is a daily reminder of how much work is left to do. In addition, the MRC is now responding to another disaster that recently hit the Gulf Coast.

On April 20, oil began leaking from the ocean floor following an explosion on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig. For many in the area, the oil spill is worse than Hurricane Katrina. “Katrina destroyed our things, our homes, our stores, our schools. The oil spill has destroyed our livelihood, our way of life,” Puckett explained during the tour.

After visiting the Emergency Operations Center in Plaquemines Parish, LTJG Hager and Puckett visited one of several Deepwater Horizon clean-up staging areas. They also toured a local church that was serving as a point of distribution (POD) where MRC and other volunteers provide

daily assistance to local response partners. Members of the community visit PODs and meet with local business representatives to receive basic necessities such as food, diapers, and cleaning supplies. Volunteers are also available to assist with completing the forms required to file claims with British Petroleum (BP) related to the oil spill.

Local fishermen unable to work due to the disaster can sign up for a 40-hour HAZWOPER course, held each week at a local church. A new class has started every Monday since the oil spill occurred, and the class continues to reach maximum capacity each week.

“Katrina destroyed our things, our homes, our stores, our schools. The oil spill has destroyed our livelihood, our way of life.”

After completing the course, the fishermen can apply for employment with BP and use their own fishing boats to assist with clean-up efforts. The Parish is also working on meeting the needs of local families who are without work. They have secured the support of *Feed the Children* and are working with local churches to identify families in need of assistance with food.

As efforts to address the oil spill disaster continue, MRC volunteers remain focused on future dangers. The Gulf Coast is in the middle of hurricane season, and it is imperative that the local community remain ready and prepared for a possible hurricane. To facilitate this effort, Plaquemines Parish MRC volunteers are hosting community meetings on hurricane preparedness and providing educational outreach programs to minimize the impact of another potential disaster to this area. ★

The Deepwater Horizon clean up effort staging area.

Oil absorbing booms used to contain spilled oil.



National Notes



Dear MRC Leaders,

The 2010 Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness, and Response Training Summit was held in Las Vegas, NV, in early June. We have received very positive feedback from many of the participants, along with some good constructive comments and ideas on how to improve this national gathering for next year. This event was especially remarkable in that

we had to reschedule and relocate due to the devastating floods in Nashville, our original Summit locale. I was incredibly impressed to see the level of commitment and flexibility demonstrated by our Summit planning staff, presenters, and participants. By all accounts, the Summit was a tremendous success!

The fact that the Summit was successfully conducted despite the challenges also shows the resilience that has been developed and fostered within the MRC network. I like the definition of resilience put forward in the article *Resilient Nation* last year: “Resilience is the capacity of an individual, community or system to adapt in order to sustain an acceptable level of function, structure, and identity.” Resilience is an important concept for MRC leaders and volunteers to understand, and to promote in their communities. In fact, building community resilience is one of the primary goals included in the National Health Security Strategy.

Through recent conversations with colleagues from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, I’ve also become very interested in the concept of Disaster Risk Reduction, and the role that local MRC units could play in reducing and perhaps even avoiding disaster risks. It has been noted that risk reduction measures

have the potential to be much more cost-effective and sustainable than the disaster response focus of many communities. I believe MRC units are uniquely positioned to reduce vulnerability to disasters through their support of efforts to reduce exposures, reduce susceptibility, and increase resilience. Many MRC units are already conducting activities in these areas. For example, health education, mass care, and evacuation help to reduce exposures; health promotion, health care, screenings, and immunizations help to reduce susceptibility. Keep in mind that a healthier population prior to a disaster will likely be less vulnerable during a disaster.

Improving preparedness is also an important component of risk reduction. Remember that September is National Preparedness Month, and all MRC units are encouraged to conduct activities to improve personal, community, and MRC unit preparedness. Information about National Preparedness Month and ways to be involved can be found at <http://www.Ready.gov>. I also encourage you to learn about the “9/11 Drill Down for Safety” initiative sponsored by the Safe America Foundation (<http://www.safeamerica.org>). The MRC has partnered with Safe America to ensure that Americans take the time to practice being prepared. On (or around) September 11, 2010, MRC leaders, volunteers, and their families should participate in a preparedness activity, such as an evacuation drill or a test of emergency communication plans.

I look forward to discussing these concepts with many of you at the upcoming MRC Regional Meetings. ★

Warmest Regards,

//CAPT Rob Tosatto//

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

News from NACCHO

Social Media at NACCHO

Do you follow the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) on Twitter? Are you a fan of NACCHO on Facebook? Are you interested in watching public health related videos and news clips on YouTube? Stay connected and up-to-date with NACCHO to discover the latest news and resources in the public health field.

Follow NACCHO on Twitter “@NACCHOalerts” and learn more about upcoming meetings and events at “@NACCHOmeets.”

Log in to Facebook and LinkedIn to search for NACCHO’s Web pages.

To view NACCHO’s YouTube channel, visit <http://www.youtube.com/NACCHOph>.

Discover NACCHO’s Communications Toolkit

This toolkit contains marketing and branding resources to help local health departments effectively communicate the value of local governmental public health, promote health and wellness, and build relationships with the media, policymakers, and the general public.

To view the Communications Toolkit, visit <http://www.naccho.org/comtoolkit>. ★

2010 Integrated Training Summit: *Las Vegas!*

Although Nashville, TN, was tragically under water during the scheduled time of the annual Integrated Training Summit, the Summit was successfully relocated to the Aria Resort in Las Vegas, NV, in a matter of weeks, thanks to the many efforts of the Chesapeake Health Education Program, Inc., Planning Committee and NACCHO's meeting planners. Despite the last minute changes, the 2010 Integrated Training Summit proved to be a successful event with approximately 600 MRC volunteers in attendance.

The Aria Resort welcomed attendees from June 2–6, 2010. Preparedness leaders enjoyed the city lights and the luxurious hotel; but even more importantly, leaders participated in invaluable trainings, workshops, poster sessions, and networking events with preparedness colleagues. Attendees were provided with a variety of sessions to choose from, with many sessions focusing on coordination, collaboration, and networking. Experts and participants discussed key focus areas such as leadership, ESF #8 integration, healthcare systems, public health, and medical resources.

In addition, a group of MRC volunteers participated in a deployment workshop where seven skill stations were set up to discuss topics such as mortuary services, shelter and settlement, and risk communications. During this all-day event, volunteers learned about the importance of preparing for a possible deployment and potential challenges associated with a deployment. MRC attendees also participated in regional breakout sessions, an MRC Spirit Day, and an MRC Awards Luncheon where various MRC volunteers and units were awarded for outstanding achievements.

MRC attendees heard from many leaders of the preparedness community. During the opening ceremony, CAPT Robert Tosatto reflected on the Nashville flood and the importance of community resilience. He stated that conference attendees were “building a culture of integration” in Las Vegas and that each attendee has a shared responsibility to keep communities safe, healthy, and resilient. Many speakers addressed the attendees throughout the conference, including the Assistant Secretary for Health, Dr. Howard Koh, and the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, Dr. Nicole Lurie. The leaders spoke of the Nashville flood, the Haiti earthquake, the oil spill, and the triumphs and challenges of the H1N1 response during the past year. Dr. Lurie commented, “H1N1 reminded us that Mother Nature is a great bioterrorist.” She also told the audience that the challenges and near misses of the year (i.e., the Christmas Day attempted terror attack on Northwest Flight 253 and the attempted car bomb attack in Times Square) are a reminder of why “we are still here today.” ★

Leaders showed MRC spirit during reception.



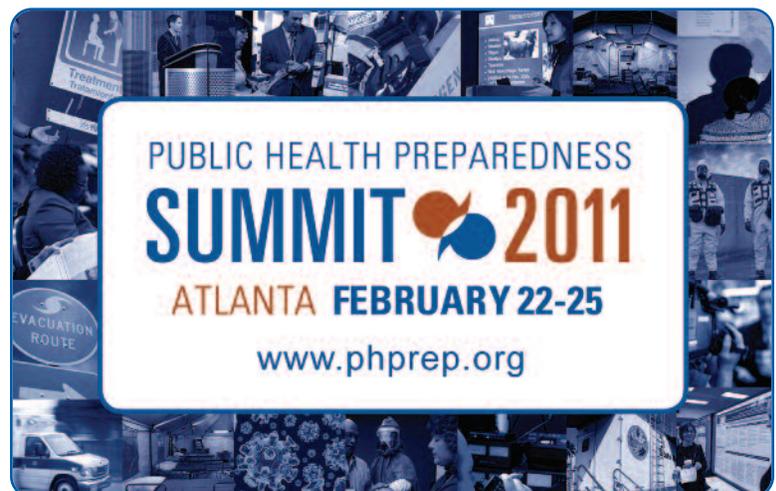
CAPT Tosatto addressed MRC attendees.

Leader facilitated a discussion on mental health.



Leader received Community Resiliency Award.

Presentations from the 2010 Summit now available online:
<http://www.integratedtrainingsummit.org/presentations/2010.php>



MRC Spotlights

Unit

The Santa Clara County Medical Volunteers for Disaster Response (MVDR) answered the call to serve their community by participating in one of the largest mass prophylaxis events in the history of Santa Clara County. The unit worked with their county's public health department to provide more than 25,000 H1N1 vaccinations to at-risk patients from November 2009 to January 2010. Over the course of six separate mass vaccination clinics, MRC volunteers fulfilled the roles of vaccinators, medical screeners, greeters, and safety officers.

The MVDR MRC has been involved in various public health and response activities. This June, volunteers were deployed to a hazardous material training course for local law enforcement personnel to assist with the medical monitoring of participants. MRC volunteers also participated in a full-scale multi-agency exercise with EMS and private ambulance providers. They practiced triage, treatment, and the transport of simulated patients. In March, MRC volunteers participated in the screening of more than 400 high school student athletes for potential cardiac problems.



MVDR MRC volunteers at an H1N1 clinic.

Volunteer

Dr. John Hickey has been a member of the Nassau County (NY) MRC for more than five years. He is a doctoral level, licensed clinical social worker. Dr. Hickey serves in the incident command role of the Mental Health Branch Director. In this role, he supervises and trains the unit's mental health professionals in disaster response and also ensures that volunteers have proper monitoring and care during an actual response. Dr. Hickey has also used his mental health and disaster response experience to be active with the National MRC Mental Health Workgroup, where he assisted in developing the Psychological First Aid course. He is also a member of the MRC federal deployment cadre. Dr. Hickey is described by unit leadership as a team player who takes a proactive role in the Nassau County MRC. He ensures that the Nassau County MRC is ready and able to provide mental health services to volunteers as well as the community it serves.

Organization

The mission of KidneyWise is to redefine the prevention of chronic kidney disease (CKD) by combining the strength of the best practices of our nation's leading organizations with the more than 50 million Americans affected by the disease. KidneyWise focuses on identifying the root causes of CKD in order to promote prevention through its HealthSourcing and WiseCommunities programs.

WiseCommunities is a community-based participatory research program. It is a long-term strategy for modifying behaviors and building social capital in families and communities to stop the CKD chain in its tracks. The MRC has been invited to be the first community member and play a pivotal role in this groundbreaking endeavor. To find more about KidneyWise and the WiseCommunities program, please visit <http://kidneywise.org>. To join WiseCommunities and begin positively impacting your community's health, please visit <http://www.wisecommunities.org>. ★

New Resources

Community Mitigation Resource Kit

The Community Mitigation Resource Kit is an easy-to-use Web-based resource guide that provides a central location for local health departments (LHDs) to obtain planning guidelines, models, recommendations, and strategies on the development and implementation of community mitigation measures taken to limit the spread and reduce the impact of pandemic influenza. The kit is useful for communities and LHDs that have yet to implement these measures, as well as those jurisdictions with more experience. To view the kit, visit <http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/DGMOQ/comm-mitigation-kit.cfm>.

MRC Toolkit and STOCKbox

STOCKbox is an online source for SNS-related tools and resources developed and shared by SNS preparedness planners.

Used a tool you found in STOCKbox? Rate it! With this exciting new feature, you can rate individual tools by giving them one to five stars as well as add comments on the tool's usefulness. Visit STOCKbox at www.naccho.org/stockbox.

Have you visited NACCHO's MRC Toolkit recently? The MRC Toolkit features helpful and effective tools designed to help your MRC unit. To access the MRC Toolkit, visit the NACCHO Toolbox at <http://www.naccho.org/toolbox>. ★

MRC Federal Deployment Training: June 14–18

On June 14, 2010, MRC volunteers from around the country traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend the Office of the Civilian Volunteers Medical Reserve Corps (OCVMRC) five-day training course on federal deployment.

The 37 volunteers who gathered at The Dupont Hotel have a variety of public health and emergency response backgrounds, and they all share the compelling desire to protect and save human lives when disaster strikes.

The OCVMRC partners with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Office of Terrorism Preparedness and Response to provide the training course twice a year for MRC volunteers who could possibly deploy outside their local health jurisdictions as part of a federal response to a disaster or public health emergency.

Participants were welcomed by the OCVMRC Program Director, CAPT Robert Tosatto; Senior Program Officer of Deployment Operations, CAPT Narayan Nair; and the MRC Deployment Operations team. CAPT Nair told the group, “As part of the MRC federal deployment cadre, you are a member of an elite group of MRC volunteers who are willing, able, and approved to augment federal response assets during a time of utmost need.” Although the training was focused on the federal aspects of disaster response, he emphasized that the MRC will always be focused on strengthening the health of local communities and members of the federal deployment cadre would only be deployed with the approval of their local unit leader.

The first day of the deployment training included a visit to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), where senior officials from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response/

Office of Preparedness and Emergency Operations greeted the attendees and gave them a tour of the impressive high-tech Secretary’s Operations Center.

Back at the hotel, Dr. Mark Keim and Molly Mahany from the CDC provided an all-hazards training to prepare volunteers for the broadest range of disasters and their public health consequences. Topics included earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, volcanoes, tsunamis, and technological disasters.

The week culminated with a mass casualty triage exercise at the National Capital Area Medical Simulation Center. The Center is part of the Bethesda-based Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, a federal health sciences university for military medical personnel.

The goal for MRC volunteers was to do “the greatest good for the greatest number” by spending no more than 60 seconds triaging each casualty from a plane crash, which was projected on 3-D screens in the Center. The MRC volunteers did what they could to maximize survival for the victims, and only one patient was lost (played by an MRC volunteer), who later bounced back to life and graduated from the training with the others. ★



Group photo of training participants.

MRC-TRAIN: Tracking Training Across the Spectrum

In the realm of public health, training is often accomplished through a wide variety of mediums—from live exercises to classroom-based workshops, to self-paced online training and beyond. Therefore, maintaining training records for an MRC unit can be a time-consuming and cumbersome task.

MRC-TRAIN provides MRC leaders with a Web-based system that has the capacity to track training regardless of how or where it was taken. For example, FEMA Independent Study courses can be tracked during the same time that volunteers may be participating in unit-specific orientations, local workshops, and cross-jurisdictional exercises. By using MRC-TRAIN, a volunteer’s entire training record can be accessed and reviewed in one location, which is available anywhere and anytime.

With thousands of already available trainings, MRC-TRAIN can also provide opportunities for volunteers to expand their knowledge and experience while earning free credits for professional licensures. MRC-TRAIN serves to organize training information for both volunteers and unit leaders.

Questions about MRC-TRAIN or requests for assistance should be directed to the MRC-TRAIN Support Desk at mrctrain@train.org or (202) 218-4426.

Additional MRC-TRAIN resources are available on the MRC Web site at <http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/TRAINResources>, and the MRC-TRAIN Web site at <https://www.mrc.train.org>. MRC-TRAIN is FREE, available 24/7, and on track! ★

MRC Volunteers Search Lake for Missing Fishermen

An empty boat was found along the shore of Castle Rock Lake, WI, after traveling nearly a mile spinning in circles with the motor running before hitting the shoreline. Two fishermen who were originally on the boat were missing. As emergency responders throughout the community were contacted, the Wisconsin Disaster Medical Response Team MRC unit was activated by a duty officer from the K-9 Emergency Response Team, the unit's housing organization, who had received a call from the Juneau County Wisconsin Sheriff's Department requesting the MRC's participation.

The search for the two missing men lasted five days; the MRC unit contributed to the search and rescue efforts during this time. The MRC volunteers were out in the field with either a K-9 search technician from the K-9 Emergency Response Team or a Ground Search Team. The K-9 Team trains dogs to locate missing people in the wilderness, water, or disaster environments.

The volunteers in the field are certified wilderness search

and Rescue—volunteers receive 40 hours of water/ice rescue training and spend at least 8 hours a year on water/ice rescue review. In addition, most of the unit's volunteers are licensed as either EMTs or paramedics. Volunteers with a veterinarian background stayed on the scene in case medical care was needed for the K-9 Team. In the field, volunteers carried a small wilderness first aid medical pack that treats either humans or K-9 searchers. The MRC also provided radios and expertise to navigate for the search team using a GPS, map, or compass. A small trailer was supplied by the MRC to be used as a command base, with one member available to provide medical treatment.

Unit coordinator, Shawn Metzner says emergency responders during the search and rescue experienced less than favorable weather conditions, such as high wind and rough waves, and the search and rescue was forced to take place from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. near a swift moving river. Metzner says the MRC members deployed on this mission, "were invaluable to the operation; while no one was injured, MRC members monitored the health and safety of both the human and K-9 searchers."

Tragically, despite the efforts of the skilled responders and the K-9 Team, the bodies of the two fishermen were recovered three weeks later. ★



Michelle Metzner of the Search and Rescue Team searched the lake with the help of one of the dogs from the K-9 unit.

MRC Participates in Full-Scale Airfield Disaster Exercise

Every three years, the Eastern Nebraska/Western Iowa MRC unit participates in a full-scale airfield disaster exercise at the Eppley Airfield in Omaha, NE. The local Omaha Metropolitan Medical Emergency Response System coordinates the area's disaster response efforts.

The exercise scenario involved a large plane carrying several hundred passengers and crew members that crashed while attempting to land at the airport. Responders included 30 MRC volunteers and the local fire team, police, Salvation Army, Red Cross, hospitals, and the Emergency Management Agency. The MRC had already participated with these agencies during planning meetings.

During the drill, MRC volunteers fulfilled the roles of the forensic dental team and clerical team at the morgue as well as the behavioral health team at the Family Assistance Center (FAC). Although all groups were well-trained, it was a challenge for the MRC to coordinate with the other participating agencies and

to send information to the volunteers or from the FAC to the morgue.

Unit coordinator, Tom McMahon says, "It is helpful for MRC volunteers to drill because it better prepares them for a real disaster and provides them with an opportunity to interact with other members and agencies."

The airfield must participate in a drill every three years—the MRC will participate again in 2013 to better prepare the unit for potential real-world events. ★



Volunteers received a brief from the coroner at the morgue.

Shawnee County MRC Joins Families at the Zoo



A hippo at Dream Night greeted a child.

The Shawnee County (KS) MRC unit participated with families of the local community at Dream Night held at a nearby zoo. Dream Night originated in the Netherlands and is now an annual event held at more than 200 zoos in 36 countries.

During Dream Night, families participate in games, face painting, and more. This event provided an opportunity for the MRC to get to know the community and a chance for members of the community to meet MRC volunteers and learn more about them. Seventeen

MRC volunteers participated in a variety of events with the children on Dream Night, including face painting, storytelling, food service, and other related events.

Unit coordinator, Don Jenkins says, “Although Dream Night was focused on the children having fun at the zoo and not public health, the MRC mingled with the community and laid a foundation for the MRC to participate in a bigger role in the future.” Jenkins advises other MRC units to “Get involved in your communities, find out what’s going on and look for ways to help. Dream Night was a success for the MRC and it provided a great opportunity for our volunteers to engage in a community event and have the public get to know us a little better.” ★

MRC Unit Helps Vaccinate More Than 700 Animals

Seven volunteers from the Franklin County and Columbus (OH) MRC unit participated in a large rabies vaccination clinic with 73 other community members, inoculating 704 animals, including ferrets, dogs, and cats. The other participants included members of the Franklin County Board of Health, the local dog shelter and dog wardens, and the Franklin County public facilities maintenance.



A dog was vaccinated in the parking lot.

The unit was approached by the environmental health community health supervisor to participate in the clinic, which lasted from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Before the clinic started, volunteers received Just-in-Time training. The MRC volunteers then participated in capacities such as rabies certification writer and veterinarian liaison; other volunteers fulfilled the roles affiliated with crowd control and registration.

Unit coordinator, Rick Roush says, “This was a great community effort. The Franklin Board of Health is fortunate to have community partners and volunteers that provide outstanding support to events that improve the health of both citizens and their animals.” ★

★ ★ ★ A Look Ahead ★ ★ ★

September

Leukemia & Lymphoma Awareness Month
5–11 National Suicide Prevention Week
18 National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day

October

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
3–9 National Fire Prevention Week
4–10 Mental Illness Awareness Week

November

American Diabetes Month
18 Great American Smokeout
20 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. Send us your interesting stories, news, best practices, and photos. Stories accompanied with photos are more likely to be included in the newsletter.

Submittal Guidelines:

- Please include contact information (e-mail and telephone number) for followup.
- 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.

E-mail us at: MRCnewsletter@naccho.org

