

Winter 2010

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MRC Unit Rescues Students in Bus Crash Scenario

In the fall of 2009, the Northeast Missouri (NEMO) MRC unit participated in an 8-hour action-packed exercise—the simulation of a deadly school bus crash. The La Plata Community Fire Protection District (five fire departments), two ambulance districts, and two local hospitals joined the MRC in the exercise. The school bus crash scenario was chosen because the NEMO-MRC serves 11 sprawling rural counties where the roads are traveled by many school buses filled with students.

Ten high school students joined this large group of volunteers and played the role of victims in the school bus crash simulation. Through the bitter cold and snow, volunteers rescued victims from the bus using saws and other tools. The firefighters' knowledge and experience in extrication was especially helpful during the exercise.

As students were rescued from the bus, volunteers faced a range of injuries among the crash victims—minor abrasions to life-threatening head and spinal injuries. The ambulance districts and MRC triaged victims at the various tents stationed near the crash site. Victims also were taken to the hospital in ambulances. A medical evacuation helicopter was supposed to fly victims with life-threatening injuries to the hospital, but due to

perilous weather conditions, the helicopter was not included in the exercise.

To prepare for the exercise, organizers held a 4-hour classroom training the previous night. A firefighter who built school buses taught volunteers how a bus is constructed, the points of extrication, the points of entry, and more. This was very valuable information, and volunteers were able to take this knowledge and apply it to the exercise. In addition, MRC volunteers had just attended an Amtrak training session sponsored by the firefighters, which taught about the construction and operation of trains and extrication points.

“Northeast Missouri (NEMO) MRC unit participated in an 8-hour action-packed exercise...”

Unit coordinator, Vickie Cooper, says the greatest accomplishment of the joint exercise “was the ability to respond to an emergency of this nature. We now have the camaraderie and system to take care of this event. It was very helpful to see others’ skills and knowledge during the rescue and the ability to work together as a team.” ★

MRC volunteers and local firefighters extricated victims from the simulated school bus crash exercise.



National Notes



Dear MRC Leaders and Volunteers,

The 2010 Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness and Response Training Summit will be held in Nashville, TN, from May 12–16, 2010. As those who attended the inaugural Summit last year can attest, this meeting provides a great opportunity to learn and interact with other MRC leaders and participants

from the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), the Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP), and the U.S. Public Health Service.

Our vision for the 2010 Integrated Training Summit is a robust, well-trained, and integrated pool of public health and medical responders who understand their roles and missions in times of need and those of their response partners to best serve our communities and the nation. The MRC will have plenty of opportunities to interact with program partners during general sessions, trainings, workshops, and networking breaks.

The sessions will be arranged in five broad focus areas:

- ESF #8 Integration
- Healthcare Systems
- Leadership
- Public Health and Clinical Care Services
- Scarce Resource Management and Medical Evacuation

In addition to workshops and sessions, the Summit will again feature poster presentations. The poster presentations are a great way to highlight important issues, promising practices, and show the value of MRC activities to fellow conference attendees. The posters will be prominently displayed, and there will be designated meet-the-author times for the poster sessions. If you are interested in submitting a poster presentation, please visit <http://teams.hhs.gov/conference/>.

The Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps (OCVMRC) will again recognize outstanding MRC units and volunteers during the Summit. Last year, OCVMRC presented awards in categories such as the Community Resiliency Award, Ambassador Award, Outstanding MRC Responder Award, Outstanding Public Health Volunteer Award, Outstanding MRC Housing Organization Award, and Outstanding MRC Partner Organization Award. The call for award nominations will be released soon, and I encourage all of you to participate. It is a great way to recognize your MRC unit and volunteers for their hard work and dedication. The award nominations will also be used to identify individuals and units to highlight in upcoming MRC Spotlights in this newsletter.

For the most up-to-date information about the Summit, please visit the official Integrated Training Summit Web site at <http://www.integratedtrainingsummit.org>. We will also send out announcements and updates on the MRC Listservs. I hope to see many of you in Nashville. ★

Warmest Regards,

//CAPT Rob Tosatto//

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

SAVE the DATE! ★★★★★★ **May 12–16** ★★★★★★

2010 Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness and Response Training Summit

Registration for the 2010 Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness and Response Training Summit is now open.

For more information, please visit:
<http://www.integratedtrainingsummit.org/registration.php>



Mass Vaccination Dispensing Clinics a Huge Success

Approximately 20 volunteers of the Adams County MRC unit (IL) planned and executed successful mass vaccination dispensing clinics in the community. To prepare for the clinics, the MRC unit met weekly with community partners at the emergency operations center during the spring H1N1 response. Through early successful planning efforts, processes and protocols for security and telephone triage were developed, and volunteer and staffing plans were created.

The MRC unit was activated by their housing organization, the Adams County Health Department, to volunteer at the mass vaccination clinic. To ensure volunteers were prepared for the clinics, the MRC held a series of educational classes on mass dispensing and the incident command system. The unit also recruited school nurses to become MRC members and administer the vaccine at the clinics. At the clinics, volunteers fulfilled nursing duties and provided supportive services and security. The nurse volunteers offered client screening and immunizations, and non-clinical volunteers directed traffic, answered questions, and provided crowd control. While patients waited in line to receive the vaccination, posters and roving volunteers explained the screening process and priority groups to people to determine whether they were eligible to receive the vaccination.

A telephone hotline was activated at a local hospital, and MRC registered nurses supplied telephone triage to callers about H1N1 and upcoming clinics. Unit coordinator Shay Drummond says, “At the October 20th clinic, we vaccinated approximately 1,800 people with an average throughput of 300 people per hour. At subsequent clinics, we were able to increase our throughput and streamline our processes; we now have a revised dispensing plan to incorporate into our Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) plan. Now, MRC volunteers will be a part of the SNS plan, and we are going to capitalize on this positive response and outcome in the community to recruit more volunteers and step up our efforts with training and integration into ongoing public health events.” ★



An aerial view of community members as they waited in line to receive a vaccination.

Tornado Response Exercise in Kentucky

The Barren River Area Development District (BRADD MRC) unit (KY) is located in a region susceptible to severe thunderstorms and tornados; therefore, 17 volunteers of the BRADD MRC unit, who also are community emergency response team members, participated in a joint training exercise with the Barren River District Health Department and the Metcalfe County Emergency Manager’s Office. Fifteen church members, two community members, and five students also participated in the exercise. The team was split into three groups headed by a team leader (incident commander) to search for victims and complete their tasks. Volunteers rotated to different stations to complete the tasks.

The tornado response exercise tested fire suppression, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. Three stations were set up to test these skills. First, the class rescued a mannequin from underneath concrete by using “cribbing techniques” (cribbing techniques are used when objects such as slabs of wood are used to stack underneath cement to help raise the concrete crushing the victim). Then, volunteers extinguished

a real fire using a fire extinguisher and searched the woods to find other victims of the tornado, who were either mannequins or high school students wearing moulage. Volunteers triaged and treated each victim using first aid supplies. At the end of the exercise, the team brought all victims to a treatment area.

Unit coordinator, C. Ann Bray says, “The exercise allowed for people to learn how to work together and be a helpful asset to our community.” ★



Volunteers practiced fire suppression.



Volunteers practiced cribbing techniques on one of the tornado victims.

New Resources

“In Focus” Survey

NACCHO developed a readership survey to discover what “In Focus” readers think about the current layout and content of the newsletter. Approximately 65 people responded to the survey. To view the results, visit: <http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MRC/resources/reports.cfm>.

MRC Toolkit and STOCKbox

Is your agency prepared to receive the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS)? STOCKbox is an online source of SNS-related tools and resources developed and shared by SNS preparedness planners. Access the STOCKbox Toolkit at: http://www.naccho.org/toolbox/program.cfm?id=6&display_name=STOCKbox.

Have you visited NACCHO’s MRC Toolkit lately? The MRC Toolkit, part of NACCHO’s Toolbox, 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>. ★

Navajo County MRC Provides Help at Shelter

In early December 2009, Navajo County in Arizona received heavy snowfall within a few days, causing power outages throughout the community. Hundreds of people were without electricity, and many residents were forced to evacuate their homes for safe refuge at the Show Low Senior Center.

The Navajo County (AZ) MRC unit was asked to help manage the shelter by the City of Show Low, Arizona. Eight MRC volunteers traveled through the snowstorm to provide electricity, food, water, and shelter to 25 citizens. In addition, the MRC volunteers removed 2 feet of snow so evacuees and American Red Cross personnel could access the shelter and the Salvation Army food truck could deliver meals.

As 25 evacuees 6 months to 65 years of age arrived at the shelter, they were registered and supplied with beds, a lounge area, and a cafeteria. MRC volunteers worked one 12-hour shift until the power was restored and evacuees were able to return to their homes.

Unit coordinator, John Zimmerman says, “The coordination between the community partners was great, and the local Area Council on Aging and Arizona Rangers also helped to coordinate senior citizens to the shelter and assisted with shelter security and snow removal. The staffing of the shelter improved the volunteer/shelter ratio.” ★

Peninsula MRC Hosts Free Rabies Vaccination Clinics

After discovering that local underserved populations were experiencing an influx of rabies among pets, the Peninsula MRC unit (VA) hosted free rabies vaccination clinics throughout the summer and fall of 2009. The Peninsula MRC unit serves the Peninsula and Hampton Health Departments and supports 460 volunteers, including 25 veterinarians.

The veterinarians and veterinarian technicians who provided the vaccinations were licensed, and several had completed MRC courses on pet disaster preparedness. To advertise the rabies vaccination clinics, flyers were distributed to the underserved areas surrounding the clinic sites. The unit received permission to operate the clinics by the city mayor/county supervisor or agency of jurisdiction. In addition, the unit coordinated with the health department, local jurisdictional management, and the animal services coordinator/control officer before holding any clinics in the community.

Each rabies vaccination clinic lasted approximately 4 hours. At the fall clinic, 113 dogs and cats were vaccinated. After the four vaccination clinics were finished, 436 animals had been vaccinated against rabies.

Peninsula MRC unit coordinator, Helen Madden, says the greatest success of the clinic was the “...number of dogs and cats vaccinated for the first time. Many of these animals were not young, indicating that we were vaccinating a population that would never have received a vaccination had it not been for the free clinic.” ★



MRC volunteers worked with dog owners at the clinic.



A small dog received a rabies vaccination.

MRC-TRAIN: Tracking the MRC Core Competencies

The MRC Core Competencies are just one of many resources available to MRC leaders to help ensure volunteers are prepared to assist with public health initiatives and preparedness and response activities. MRC-TRAIN provides MRC leaders with the ability to attach MRC Core Competencies to classroom- and Web-based training. All MRC leaders have access to (by request) the *Course Provider* role on MRC-TRAIN, which provides the ability to post trainings. This allows leaders to track competency-based education to identify ready volunteers and gaps in volunteer readiness.

Competency training can be tracked through a *Training Plan* assigned directly to volunteers or through the *Reports* module. The *Training Plan* allows leaders to designate a completion date and monitor volunteers as they progress through required and optional courses. The *Reports* module allows users to generate customizable reports on volunteer data, including MRC Core Competencies. The *Course Availability by MRC Competency Report* provides information about available courses that incorporate the MRC Core Competencies and can be distributed among volunteers.

Additional resources on tracking competency-based training are available on the MRC Web site (<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/TRAINResources>) and 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

NACCHO developed an H1N1 blog as a source for timely, updated information regarding the H1N1 influenza outbreak. Through the use of the H1N1 blog, health departments can share their stories from the field and lessons learned with H1N1. We want to hear your H1N1 story! Let your voice be heard on the successes and challenges you had during the H1N1 response by e-mailing H1N1info@naccho.org, or complete an online submission form at: <http://www.naccho.org/topics/H1N1/stories.cfm>.

NACCHO is collecting H1N1-related stories from the field online. The stories from the field are intended to assist local health departments (LHDs) with their pandemic H1N1 response, improve advocacy efforts on behalf of LHDs, and more. If you would like to submit useful practices or share a story, visit: http://www.naccho.org/topics/H1N1/stories_search.cfm. ★

MRC Spotlights

Unit Spotlight

The University of Minnesota Medical Reserve Corps (U of M MRC) was founded in April 2004 and consists of 800 volunteers. The U of M MRC has been actively involved in responding to the community's needs through its ongoing response to H1N1 influenza. The unit also is credited for having one of the best training curriculums—a unique, online training that includes orientation and other leadership tools. This training curriculum is available to all MRC units in Minnesota.

In the spring of 2009, the unit provided assistance during the Red River flooding. Minnesota MRC state coordinator, Rob Carlson, described the unit as providing “commendable support, coordination, and response of volunteers.”

In 2008, the unit beat the Guinness World Record with the most flu shots administered in one day.

Volunteer Spotlight

Katrina McCauley is a busy volunteer and serves as the Logistics Chief for the Calcasieu MRC unit. McCauley manages the unit's three trailers, which consist of the mobile health unit and command center, CERT training equipment, medical supplies, and operational equipment.

McCauley's strong work ethic and dedication to the MRC unit and the response to the evacuations for Hurricane Gustav and Tropical Storm Ike have earned McCauley this volunteer spotlight recognition. During Gustav and Ike, she stayed in the Office of Emergency Preparedness during the storms, opened three shelters for evacuees immediately after the storms, and picked up donations for residents.

As a third-year volunteer, McCauley attends every Calcasieu MRC unit-sponsored event and often steps into leadership roles. Unit coordinator, Angela Jouett, says that McCauley is “the most dedicated volunteer I have ever worked with. I have a lot of respect for her values in any emergency situation.” ★

The graphic features a night view of a city skyline with a bridge over water. The text 'save the dates' is at the top. Below it, 'July 14-16' is written in large, stylized font. To the right, a dark box contains 'NACCHO ANNUAL 2010' in white. At the bottom, the website 'www.naccho.org/na2010' and the location 'Memphis Cook Convention Center • Marriott Memphis Downtown • Memphis, Tennessee' are listed.

Coastal MRC Assists with Distribution of Antivirals

The Coastal MRC unit (SC) was established in 2007 and is housed within the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), Region 8. This unique partnership has led the unit's volunteers to become involved with the distribution of antivirals from the strategic national stockpile (SNS) to local providers and pharmacies.

A database was developed to include the contact information of 64 local pharmacies and providers. Thirty-four of the 64 pharmacies and providers signed a memorandum of agreement; since then, 41 orders and shipments of antivirals have been made to these pharmacies and providers (some are repeat customers).

Unit coordinator, Pat Sheehan, RN, CCM, CRRN, helped initiate the partnership with DHEC and the providers in the area. Sheehan asked Mike Masters, a former pharmacist and current MRC volunteer, to join this initiative. He has played a significant role in the packing and distribution of antivirals, and his experience as a pharmacist is very helpful with dialogue between doctors and other health professionals. Carolyn Jenkins, MSN, RN-BC, a DHEC employee, and Mike Masters, are available to pharmacists and doctors to assist with questions regarding antiviral medications and assistance with ordering antivirals as needed.

In addition, a list is maintained that includes all regional pharmacies and providers that have received the SNS of Tamiflu and Relenza. When community members or providers call the health department asking for antiviral medication, they are referred to the local pharmacies and providers equipped with antiviral medication.

Although the partnership involves many public and private entities, it is successful because of the organization and leadership put forth by volunteers. The collaboration has strengthened the community and serves as an excellent example for future dispensing of SNS medical countermeasures. ★



MRC volunteers, Mike Masters and Carolyn Jenkins, prepared for the distribution of antivirals.

Mental Health Education in the Big Apple

The New York City (NY) MRC unit is one of the largest units, boasting 9,118 volunteers; of which, 1,673 are mental health professionals. After experiencing the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the NYC MRC understands the value and need for psychological first aid training. Throughout the year, the unit hosted trainings on All-Hazards Disaster Mental Health for MRC volunteers.

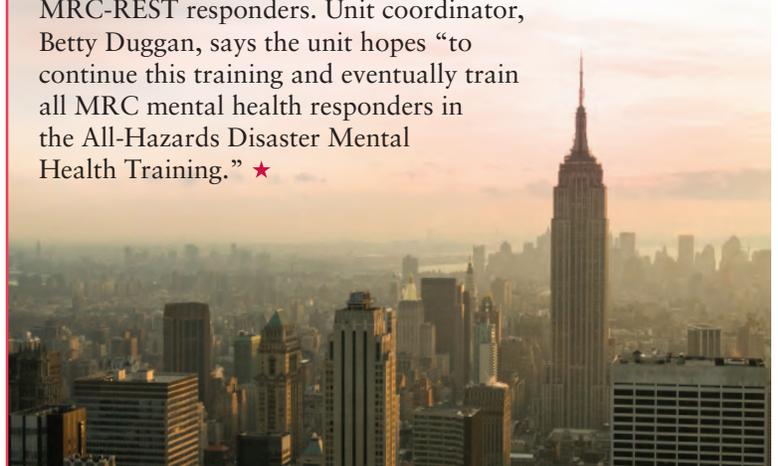
The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), Office of Disaster Mental Health Preparedness and Response, developed the 7-hour Continuing Medical Education-approved All-Hazards Disaster Mental Health Training for the Department of Health's mental health responders, who are part of the MRC Resilience and Emotional Support Team (REST).

During the training, volunteers received a "REST go bag," which included psychological first aid and self-care wallet cards, a guide to mental health risk communication, strategies on ways to alleviate the stress of the incoming public, referral information for ongoing mental health services, a REST responder emergency checklist, an orange REST hat and bag for easy identification of a mental health responder, and more.

Participants of the full-day training learned about the effects of a disaster on human behavior and response, post-disaster stress and recovery process, and how to intervene effectively with a vulnerable population and its limited resources.

Important concepts such as organizational response at the local, state, federal, and volunteer levels were described, and volunteers learned how to differentiate disaster mental health services such as traditional psychotherapy, appropriate sites for the delivery of health services, crisis intervention, self-care, and much more.

The DOHMH successfully trained 80 MRC mental health responders who are now qualified as DOHMH MRC-REST responders. Unit coordinator, Betty Duggan, says the unit hopes "to continue this training and eventually train all MRC mental health responders in the All-Hazards Disaster Mental Health Training." ★



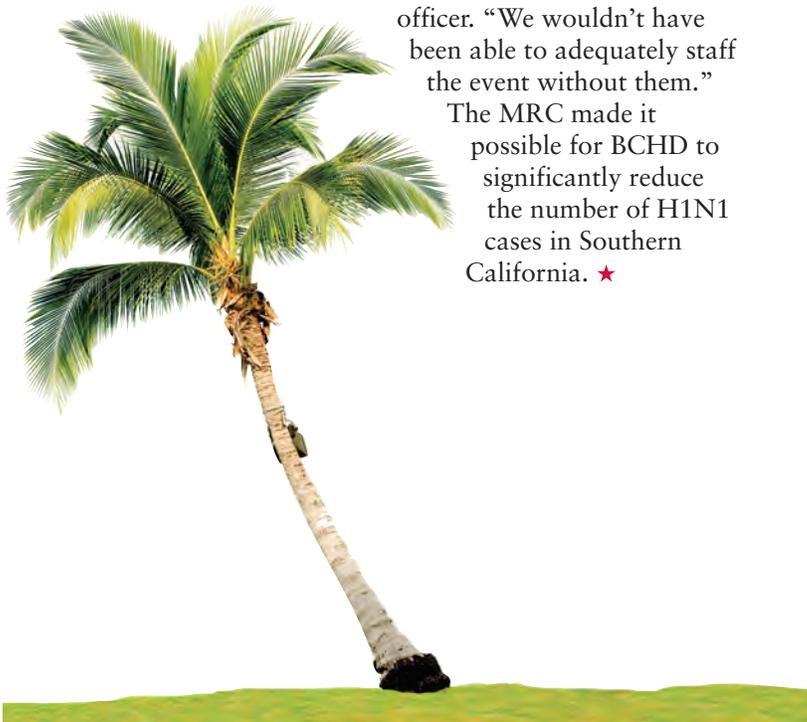
Free Vaccination Clinic Vaccinates More than 2,700 People

The Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) MRC unit (CA) has approximately 100 volunteers and serves citizens in Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach, and Redondo Beach, which are located within the South Bay of Los Angeles County.

Just one day after President Barack Obama declared the H1N1 flu a national emergency, volunteers of the BCHD MRC unit, LA County MRC unit, and local agencies such as the LA County Public Health Department, Redondo Beach Police Department, and others, volunteered at a drive-thru point of dispensing clinic for H1N1 vaccinations. Targeting high-risk residents in and around Redondo Beach, the free clinic administered more than 2,700 vaccinations, and volunteers dedicated more than 200 hours of service.

“MRC volunteers provided us with needed clinical expertise to provide thousands of vaccinations that day,” says Lisa Santora, BCHD chief medical officer. “We wouldn’t have been able to adequately staff the event without them.”

The MRC made it possible for BCHD to significantly reduce the number of H1N1 cases in Southern California. ★



★ ★ ★ A Look Ahead ★ ★ ★

March

National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
10 National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
14–20 National Poison Prevention Week

April

National Minority Health Awareness Month
7 World Health Day
24–25 2010 March for Babies

May

American Stroke Month
3–7 National Mental Health Counseling Week
12–16 Integrated Training Summit
<http://www.integratedtrainingsummit.org/>
18 HIV Vaccine Awareness Day



We Want to Hear from You!

We need your help to make this newsletter informative, interesting, and beneficial to MRC units nationwide. Share news, ideas, interesting stories, and best practices, or tell us about outstanding volunteers.

Submission 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

