

Community Awareness Project Established MRC Unit

TAHLEQUAH TEENS WIN NATIONALS!

Months of practice, rehearsal and positive support paved the way to national achievement for two remarkable Tahlequah High School seniors this June in Orlando, Florida. Samantha Scott and Tori Hicks outstandingly demonstrated their efforts, knowledge and professionalism in competitive program presentations at the Health

Reserve Corps we had been in touch with Kendal Darby, State Administrator for the Oklahoma MRC, and she quizzed us and helped us get ready for our meetings with local medical and emergency response officials," said Samantha, noting that hundreds of volunteers have since

registered with the new MRC due to their months of constant coordination and communications with local/regional leadership. "Kendal has been really awesome in helping us make it through this project."

The teens worked on the project every day from their designated class desk, computer and printer reserved just for their project. Since their initial local orientations, the teens worked on their portfolio and

"We were lucky, because you never know what factors might come into play when you don't have the balance of a panel's vote," said Tori. Then the top 10 presenters were called randomly to the main stage, followed by the top three in descending order who were called to stand on elevated platforms to receive their medals.

"Until we saw Ms. Cone jumping up and down, we really didn't realize we won," said Tori. "Then we kept jumping up and down and screaming. We were so excited, so shocked and so happy!"

Traveling along with Cone and family members, the girls also attended with Angela Chuculate, who was sent to national in recognition of her HOSA newsletter, but not to compete. Their recreational activities featured time on Coco Beach swimming and tanning as well as watching beach volleyball games. They also attended the "Our Body" exhibit at the Orlando Science Center, where actual educational cadavers contain preservative wax in place of drained



Samantha Scott, Vickie Cone and Tori Hicks

Occupation Students of America (HOSA) 2007 Conference. Winning First Place in Community Awareness, Secondary Level, the students in Vickie Cone's Vo-Tech Health Sciences class worked to establish an MRC unit for their community awareness project.

"We wanted to do something that would bring local leadership together and most definitely benefit everyone in our area," said Tori, as it was reported in the Spring 2007 MRC Monitor. "We had good emergency management but thought we needed better first response training."

"We put a lot of thought into our project and ultimately decided to try and create a Medical Reserve Corps in Tahlequah," said Samantha. The teens learned that the Medical Reserve Corps is a strictly volunteer organization designed to have a well-devised plan for natural and man-made disasters and to inform local area residents about community health initiatives. That new unit development led to state HOSA championship in spring and ultimately brought them to Orlando.

Held at the Marriott World Center Hotel (Marriott's largest), events lasted June 19-24 in the nation's number one convention destination city.

"During our whole process starting our Medical

presentation for the state HOSA competition in April. Then they set up their MRC Executive Committee for the area, the last big step to become an official MRC unit. Today the girls serve on that Executive Committee, meeting with its Steering Committee in July to organize training and volunteer orientations.

After winning state, they considered the national competition with all their expenses paid as icing on the cake.

"We were ready, but nervous," said Tori. "We really wanted it and repeatedly practiced our speech on the plane and in the hotel room. We were confident, but were warned by Ms. Cone not to get big heads, so we tried to be prepared to lose."

Competition for the nearly 50 teams in several rooms required a 15-minute set-up with a ten-minute condensed presentation detailing their months of efforts, followed by two minutes of questions—all slated before a panel of three judges. However, due to late changes, they presented to just one judge who asked a slew of questions afterwards, she was so intrigued with their success.

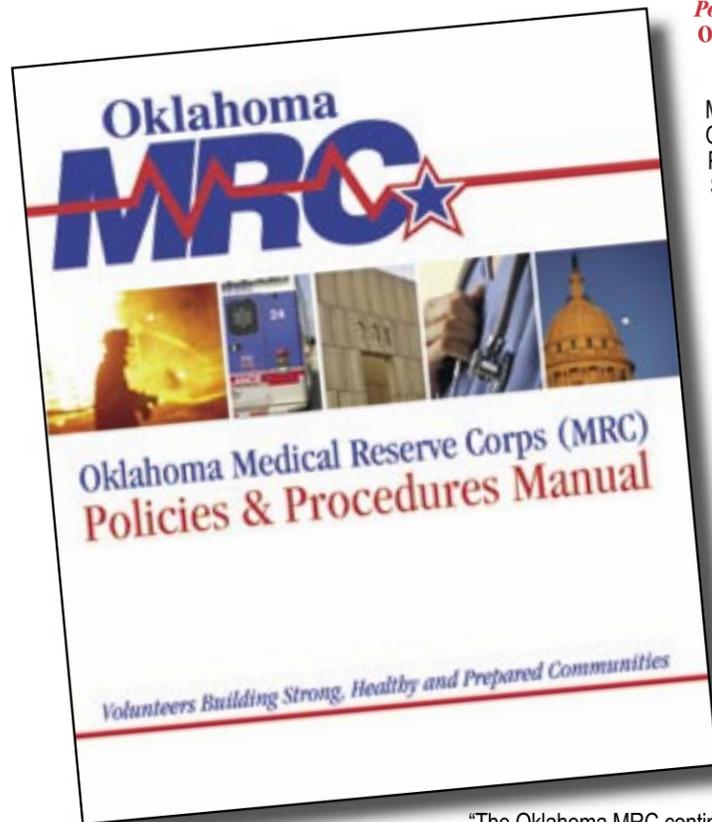
To Dr. Jim Koeninger
Executive Director, HOSA

"...I was pleased to note a recent HOSA-MRC success story. Two members of the Tahlequah, Oklahoma High School HOSA chapter recently received state (and national--MRC Monitor Ed. Note) recognition for their service project. They worked with their community and state leaders to establish a Medical Reserve Corps unit in Tahlequah, and their initial recruitment campaign netted over 100 potential members. Their initiative and desire to improve their community is to be commended. I am always impressed when I hear accounts of HOSA's activities....Leading the integration of emergency preparedness training into the health science programs is sure to bring up a next generation of health care providers that is more prepared for the variety of challenges and threats that they may face. I truly believe that HOSA is benefitting our nation by improving the personal preparedness of its members, increasing awareness about the MRC as a way to better the health and safety of communities, and promoting the U.S. Public Health Service as a potential career choice...."

Sincerely,
CAPT Robert J. Tosatto
Director, Medical Reserve Corps Program

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VITAL STEPS



Policies & Procedures Manual Official Guidelines Promote Statewide MRC Utilization

September marks the publishing debut of the first edition of the Oklahoma Medical Reserve Corps' Policies and Procedures Manual (P&P), a joint effort of OKMRC State Administrator Kendal Darby and Tulsa Health Department Emergency Preparedness Division's Johna Easley as well as numerous OKMRC Statewide Steering Committee members.

"The OKMRC Policies and Procedures manual is a collaborative effort of many contributing partners," said Easley. "The goal was to produce a unified guide for response efforts and to define communications and capabilities statewide. We wanted to be able to hand this document to emergency managers, first responders, hospital administration, and public health administrators across the state and have them understand what the OKMRC is and what we can provide."

"The OKMRC has evolved into a deployable and vital resource for local communities. Understanding our capabilities and limitations pre-disaster helps to ensure that MRC Units can be quickly and efficiently utilized when and where they are needed," said Easley. "We looked at several P&P models and took ideas from each to create a document that would fit the needs of Oklahoma."

Slated for statewide distribution, this publication encourages utilization of OKMRC volunteers in times of need and serves as a communications resource for all levels of state and community response agencies.

"This manual will streamline communications and solidify protocols for each of our partners and emergency responders across the state," said Darby, adding that 100 policies and procedures manuals will be distributed throughout Oklahoma.

The Policies and Procedures manual includes OKMRC's History; Program Overview; Organizational and Administration Sections; Volunteer Relations; Media; Liability; Volunteer Utilization; Volunteer Accountability; Uniforms and Equipment; Community Partners and Forms. The content of this document will serve as the central resource for the OKMRC Volunteer Handbook, which is due for completion in 2008.

"The Oklahoma MRC continues to strive for excellence," said Darby. "By completing this document, it is proof positive our program is one of the top in the nation."

ONA PROMOTES MRC AT AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

The Oklahoma Nurses Association, represented by Loren Stein, RNC, MSN, presented a poster at the American Nurses Association Conference entitled *The Oklahoma Nurses Association and the Medical Reserve Corps—The Best Resource* in Atlanta on June 20-22. The three-day conference was ANA's Quadrennial Policy Conference, *Nursing Care in Life, Death and Disaster*, developed in partnership with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Association of State and Territorial Directors of Nursing. One highlight of this conference was the creation of a policy paper that addresses the American Nurses Association's position on the standard of care appropriate to disasters.

The ONA poster identified the advantages for nursing professional organizations to develop their volunteer nurse registries in partnership with a

Medical Reserve Corps. Organization advantages include the economy of scale in developing a database and working Web site, the credentialing process, and rapid communication and response during a disaster. Advantages for an individual participating in the Medical Reserve Corps include: liability protection, training and exercise opportunities and the safety features of responding within a National Incident Management System integrated program.

Oklahoma is the only state in which the professional nursing organization sponsored a Medical Reserve Corps. Many state nursing organizations have developed volunteer nurse registries. The goal of this poster presentation was to encourage nursing organizations to forge partnerships with the Medical Reserve Corps in their area. The concept was well received by representatives of many nursing organizations and states, according to Stein.



MRC PARTNERS' POINTS

OCCHD Outreach Targets Thousands Regionally

Oklahoma City-County Health Department (OCCHD) works closely with MRC, providing specific training to prepare volunteers for working within OCCHD's infrastructure. About 800 people have designated OCCHD as their primary response site, but up to 3,000 volunteers could be needed to fully staff a site. In July, the Emergency Response Department completed a mass mailing to over 500 neighborhood associations' presidents, in order to recruit new members. The material introduced OCCHD Emergency Response Volunteer Coordinator Emily J. Rightmyer, who conducts presentations on the importance of a strong volunteer network and preparedness efforts.



"We have a need for a diverse network of volunteers-licensed medical professionals as well as non-medical," said Rightmyer, who also sent 300 letters to individuals who had volunteered with OCCHD in the past. OCCHD uses only MRC volunteers, so anyone who wants to volunteer with OCCHD must register with MRC. Rightmyer has received numerous calls of interest in response to the outreach, some wanting to volunteer and others with questions or requesting additional information. In general, a mass mailing feedback rate of 2% is considered successful, but since many targets were previous participants, early initial response to date indicates that it will potentially exceed that.

"It's essential to have an organized and trained network of volunteers ready to respond when disaster strikes," explained Rightmyer, "so the volunteers can be properly trained for their own safety and are comfortable performing critical tasks. By becoming an MRC volunteer, you will be able to participate in both scheduled events (like flu clinic exercises) and respond to unforeseen incidents (like a tornado, bioterrorism, or flu outbreak) with OCCHD. Plus you will have the opportunity to learn from a diverse group of speakers as well as receive valuable hands-on training while networking with other emergency response volunteers."

Many people reached expressed excitement about joining the MRC and interest in attending the monthly meetings. OCCHD will host Mary Steiner, RN, BSN, and Elizabeth Baldwin, RN, BSN, at the Oklahoma City unit meeting on August 12. Steiner works as Nurse Coordinator and Baldwin is a Public Health Nurse and Point of Dispensing (POD) Coordinator. They will present an overview detailing POD operations, which will be essential for those volunteers who are planning to assist with the upcoming November flu exercise. Both Steiner and Baldwin have previously conducted full-scale POD exercises, so their experience is a great resource for volunteers, according to Rightmyer.

On September 11, 2007, Carol F. Smith, MLS, the Bioterrorism and Emergency Response Educator and Media Specialist who has more than 30 years of education experience, will give an All-Hazards Preparedness and Response presentation, including a question and answer session.

"I've been fortunate to hear several of Carol's presentations," said Rightmyer. "She is creative, insightful and well-versed in the area of public health all-hazards preparedness and response. Audiences find her presentations stimulating, which leads to interesting discussion amongst Carol and the audience."



Public Engagement Campaign—THD Recruits Volunteers & Generates MRC Awareness

The Tulsa Health Department (THD) recently kicked off the initial phase of a social marketing/community awareness campaign for the Tulsa Medical Reserve Corps.

"The health department recognizes the importance of a strong and active local MRC and wants to help facilitate the growth and development of the Tulsa unit," said Johna Easley, Emergency Preparedness Division, Tulsa Health Department. "Medical Reserve Corps volunteers are a critical component to public health preparedness/response and recovery efforts."

THD will work with Littlefield Advertising Agency to research and review data received from current local MRC volunteers, subject matter experts, and non-affiliated citizens regarding volunteer involvement and participation, resulting in a 30-second television advertisement.

"Our vision is for this campaign to be piloted in Tulsa County and then eventually be duplicated by other OKMRC chapters, counties or partners statewide," said Easley. "We also recognize that this project could potentially help other MRC's across the nation with recruitment efforts."

The project is still under development but is scheduled for completion on August 31. Approximately 850 registered volunteers serve in Tulsa County with more than 3,700 statewide. Mass vaccination/immunization or medication of the Tulsa County population following a large outbreak or biological attack would require all health department staff and approximately 3,000 volunteers.

"The participation and dedication of OKMRC volunteers truly makes Oklahoma communities healthier and safer places to live and work," said Kendal Darby, OKMRC State Administrator. "That same dedication and community participation leads to community resiliency in times of disaster or crisis."



*For beautiful eyes, look for the good in others;
for beautiful lips, speak only words of kindness;
and for poise, walk with the knowledge
that you are never alone.*
— Audrey Hepburn

Caring, Capable, & Ready

MRC volunteers from Chickasha and Lawton joined forces June 16th at Grady Memorial Hospital, where a realistic mock disaster scenario helped promote rapid response times and treatments to streamline care and communications in crisis.

About 30 "patients" received 90-minutes of moulage, specialized make-up produced and applied to simulate



injuries such as burns, fractures, abrasions, bruises, cuts and scrapes. Performed by MRC volunteers Janet Horock, Linda McCue and Juan and Lydia Rosa, the moulage helped lend credibility to the practice experience.

The scenario focused on a Boy and Cub Scout Safety Day at the hospital, where they were participating outside seeking shade on a loading dock when an explosion went off, collapsing part of the dock.

"I felt it was very organized and effective for participants," said Horock, an administrative assistant at the Lawton MERC office who has served two years as a volunteer, 18 months of it in moulage. "I'd never done anything like moulage. It was brand new to me, but our Lawton Unit training exercises needed it, I was interested and went to Carson City, Nevada, to attend five days of training and instruction in its creation and application," which was also attended by the Rosas. Moulage supplies funded by MRC derive from a national company.

Event coordinator Peggy Riley reported that 18 Grady County volunteers participated in the exercise that was planned since last spring to accommodate as many schedules as possible to maximize participation. The ICU nurse manager for 15 years has volunteered since MRC's inception, previously dedicating time to the area's former Community Emergency Response Team, MRC's predecessor. The volunteers ranged from physicians, nurses and speech pathologists to lay people.

"We worked on how to be more organized and prepared, recognizing the important of triage and repeating that portion to make adjustments and

Joint Emergency Response Exercise Teaches Communications, Demonstrates Triage with Moulage



corrections," said Riley of the 2:00-4:30 p.m. effort. Actual Scouts volunteered along with members' children and grandchildren, she said.

Incident commander Dr. Tom Wicks participated along with his two sons, ages 10 and 7, who worked as "victims." A podiatrist for 13 years, Wicks joined MRC a year ago, originating as volunteer chief medical officer with the Grady County Fire Service, the third largest in the state after Tulsa and Oklahoma City. He's served with them for five years. His wife, family physician Laura Black-Wicks, also volunteers for MRC. They attended the recent National MRC Leadership Conference held in Providence last spring.



"It was a great learning experience, very impressive and lifelike," he said. "This was the first time I participated in an exercise that large. It was quite orderly despite rain, so we looked like drowned rats. But the response trailer was there, which I'd never worked with before.

We triaged wounded, utilized CERT training and did quite well, especially after fine-tuning responses the second time."

Dr. Wicks reported that everyone worked smoothly together for an excellent team effort. "They made me look good," he said with a chuckle. "It's easy to work with them. They came through in fine fashion."

Born and raised in Iowa, the family spent 10 years in Indiana before relocating to Chickasha three years ago to join the multi-specialty Fire Oaks Medical Group. The specialty group members, who's practice is housed at Grady Memorial belong to MRC.



"It's great to know we can call on the MRC if needed for large scale efforts," Dr. Wicks said. "MRC is wonderful to rely on and so effective. They really can save lives. The county is blessed to have the MRC resources that we do — They're powerful tools. Exercises like this show what we can do in the event of an actual disaster."

Riley described the educational advantages of participating in such a scenario exercise.

"One of the main things we gleaned was the realization that triage is not treating patients," said Riley, "but taking 30 seconds per victim to bandage, tag by color for treatment, count and move on," noting the "buddy system" of leap frogging with a partner means just that — never going alone. "Anyone can triage with a few guidelines."

For example, a patient who is breathing but unconscious needs immediate attention. Patients with respirations over 30 require immediate treatment, but under 30 can be delayed. If the patient can follow simple commands, they can wait for treatment, if not, they must be treated immediately.



Clear communications also has critical impact, according to Riley, who noted things as simple as correct radio frequencies with intensive care come into play. Proper triage bandage sizing and ribbon tagging was also established from the exercise, as was the need to always ask about utilities status, fire presence, etc., at briefings.

Volunteers utilized a response trailer funded by MRC grants, co-designed by Tom Wise, built to specs by Peggy's brother-in-law Dale Riley and painted by her self-employed auto-

body expert husband of 37 years, Wickie. The trailer contains all its own emergency response equipment and supplies, from generators and lights to stretchers and tourniquets, most paid for with grants but some donated.

Employed at Grady Memorial since 1984, Peggy Riley graduated from Oklahoma City Community College.



She became involved with MRC when Dr. Thomas Essex asked her to. "It sounded like something I could help with and lend my skills to," she said. "It never occurred to me to say no, and I've been on board ever since."

"I love our community. We're all family here," she said of the atmosphere at Grady. "I never was interested in a major metropolitan area. Smaller towns are just a much better fit for me. You get to know everyone and we take care of and look out for each other."

"Anyone considering volunteering for MRC, whether a medical professional or not, should look into it," Riley said. "We have terrific educational opportunities, training and support from MRC leadership. You can make a difference and have fun, too."



'RUFF' TIMES RESOLVED!

After torrential rainfall descended on the northeastern Oklahoma town of Miami July 3, MRC Coordinator and Oklahoma City veterinarian Scott Mason began the process of activating the Oklahoma Medical Reserve Corps (OK MRC) Animal Response Team. Rainfall totals surpassed the historic 1986 flood with waters cresting several feet higher than that disaster. Comprised of volunteer veterinarians, veterinary technicians and other personnel interested in animals and animal related issues in a disaster, the team addresses the special needs of animal populations in emergency/crisis situations.



Dr. Scott Mason and five Tulsa MRC volunteers, Dr. Judy Zinn, DVM, Larry Zinn, Tracy Hendrickson, Shane and Carol Conner

Officials estimate at least 1,500 people were evacuated from Miami and the surrounding area. More than 110 dogs and cats displaced by flooding in northeast Oklahoma were temporarily housed at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M University arena. Strays and owner relinquished pets brought pet totals closer to 200, according to Dr. Mason. Normally housing 30 animals, the City of Miami Animal Shelter's population quickly rose to approximately 100 animals as the flood waters continued to climb. Many of these cats and dogs are family pets, privately owned by displaced Miami flood victims.



Per MRC Special Teams activation protocols, Mason coordinated efforts with Kendal Darby, OK MRC State Administrator. The initial request for assistance with animal sheltering and rescue was received from the City of Miami's Tim Wilson, Public Works Director. That same day, Mason and five Tulsa MRC volunteers, Dr. Judy Zinn, DVM, Larry Zinn, Tracy Hendrickson, Shane and Carol Conner arrived first to coordinate the animal response and assist with the overwhelmed animal shelter population. They provided much-needed items, including building materials for an immediate needs outdoor

shelter, 25 extra cages and cleaning supplies. When numbers kept rising, the shelter was relocated to the arena.

The team deployed three different times: to establish the shelter; to deliver the trailer for a local veterinarian who was flooded out so it could operate; and, to test/evaluate cats and dogs at the shelter to ready them for transportation to adoption facilities. Those efforts wrapped up July 25.

MRC Animal Response worked closely with area animal non-profits, regional animal controls, state and emergency management and the Department of Agriculture to coordinate ongoing animal care and transport. Oklahoma City transported the last of animals out on July 25. Then the shelter was closed. In conjunction, a widely promoted public awareness effort helped draw potential new families to the shelter to help the animals find their forever homes.

"Everyone worked very well together within our system," said Dr. Mason. "No problems were encountered thanks to the broad cooperation and efforts of so many individuals and entities." He especially noted the generosity of Northeastern Oklahoma A&M University and the Animal Welfare Society of Miami, who provided all the shelter's daily operations volunteer labor, as tasked by the city to run the shelter and coordinate efforts. State and Miami Emergency Management also played key roles in helping the animals throughout the month, Mason said. Meanwhile, State Administrator Darby kept the State Department of Health and National MRC leadership apprised of developments.

In conjunction, the American Humane Association (AHA) arrived on July 4 to assist the OK MRC Animal Response Team (at MRC's request) with the rescue of animals affected by the flooding. The additional crates and supplies donated

allowed a large-scale animal response. Of the four vet clinics in Miami, three were operational and functioning, but one was flooded out completely.

The OK MRC Animal Response Team provided ongoing support to the City of Miami by locating necessary equipment, medical supplies and other resources until shelter operations return to normal status at month's end. Until then, the shelter and vet clinics continued to take in rescued pets and tried to reunite them with their owners.

Local authorities gave AHA responsibility (with MRC's assistance) for animal rescue activities in the area, and AHA assessed the scene with MRC and arranged for animal rescues by road, foot and boat. The organization also assisted in transporting animals sheltered outdoors to several buildings that were made available to provide the animals protection from the weather. AHA also mobilized a 14-person team in Miami, drawing from the organization's nationwide network of trained animal emergency services volunteers. The responders deployed from California, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Maryland and Washington state, with most of them traveling over the Independence Day holiday.

"We were in close contact with the local authorities as the situation developed..." said Marie Belew Wheatley, president and chief executive officer of American Humane. "As soon as we were requested to provide assistance, our Red Star Animal Emergency Services responders mobilized from all parts of the country on very short notice. Our team includes responders who participated in the Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, so they know what to expect and how to provide the best support to the local agencies, the communities and the animal victims of disaster."



MRC ANIMAL RESCUE TEAM ACTIVATED TO MIAMI DURING JULY 4th HOLIDAY FLOODING



As part of the deployment, American Humane activated its 82-foot-long animal emergency "Disaster Response Rescue Rig." The customized tractor-trailer outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment serves as an emergency command center, responder base of operations and mobile veterinary clinic. The self-sufficient rig contains boats, rescue equipment,

electrical generators, a water tank, living accommodations and enough supplies to support 15 rescue workers for 10 days without restocking. American Humane also sent additional support vehicles loaded with approximately 60 cat and dog crates, extra generators and miscellaneous supplies. "The Oklahoma Medical Reserve Corps is proud to assist and provide relief to those individuals who care for animals during disasters. It serves as a compliment to our program to have volunteers like those deployed to Miami representing the values we uphold," said Darby.

Mercy to animals
means
mercy to mankind.
- Henry Bergh

BADGE DISTRIBUTION UNDERWAY

Find out badging times and locations for your area by logging on to www.okmrc.org and click "Calendar"

**OKLAHOMA
MRC
OKLAHOMA COUNTY
MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS**

Loren Stein
RN
EXPIRES 05-25-2009

TAHLEQUAH TEENS WIN NATIONALS - continued from page 1

fluids to illustrate body composition, including muscle structure and circulatory systems.

"It was very informative and interesting," said Tori, who had visited the Gulf Coast but not the Atlantic Ocean. "It's beautiful and even better than the Gulf because you don't have all the jellyfish. Orlando is a lot of fun with so much to do. It's a great place to visit and a blast for tourists, but its subsequent popularity makes it quite heavy with traffic congestion, crowds and lines."

A documentary/video reenactment of their presentation and project will be shown at the Fall Oklahoma HOSA conference, where Tori is running for state HOSA office. In addition, it will air at the HOSA Teachers Year-end Luncheon in August, also in Tulsa, where the teens will attend to answer questions about their project and experiences. Meanwhile they're fielding interviews with numerous state and regional print and broadcast media outlets celebrating their achievements, including *Oklahoma Horizon*, *Tahlequah Daily Press* and national/state HOSA organizations, among others, which want the presentation, too.

Both varsity soccer players who belong to the local HOSA chapter, Samantha plans to become an obstetrical or flight nurse and Tori will attend medical school to be an anesthesiologist. This summer Tori is volunteering at a hospice while Samantha is preparing to start LPN classes in conjunction with her senior year.

"I knew Tori and Samantha could do this," said Darby, who coached the girls throughout the process of MRC establishment. "I'm one of their biggest fans and am absolutely thrilled for them. When they called and said they won I was just ecstatic. They worked so many countless hours and accomplished so much. It's extremely gratifying to know their efforts are officially recognized nationwide. They truly deserve it."

Special Teams — Oklahoma DMAT FEDERAL DISASTER MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM LENDS EXPERTISE TO MRC

Rapid medical response anywhere anytime—that's the national need filled by Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT) coast to coast. Operating under and deployed by the Health and Human Services Department, DMAT's volunteers provide austere medical care in a disaster area or medical services at transfer points and reception sites associated with patient evacuation. Formerly under FEMA auspices, DMAT deploys anywhere in the U.S. or its territories, such as the Virgin Islands in 1995 for Hurricane Marilyn.

In mass casualty incidents or disasters, DMAT primarily provides triage (patient sorting, injury and survivability assessments); medical care (under field conditions in the immediate disaster area); and staging (preparation for mass transport to medical facilities outside the affected area). The United States runs more than eighty DMATs nationwide. OK-1 DMAT, as it is known, is one of 26 Level One teams nationwide that is fully trained, equipped and capable of rapid deployment to disaster scenes throughout the country and its possessions.

Oklahoma DMAT members comprise more than 120 physicians, nurses, EMTs, nurse practitioners, respiratory therapists and additional medical professionals as well as numerous non-medical individuals serving in communications and logistics capacities. About half derive from health care fields and half from the general public.

"As Oklahoma's MRC was taking off about three years ago, we recognized there was joint interest in DMAT helping out with state and local missions—MRC's specialty," said Dr. Art Wallace, emergency physician for the St. John's System in Tulsa. The Oklahoma native helped establish the Oklahoma DMAT as a not-for-profit corporation in 1991. He attended conferences via public health and federal agencies at that time when agencies created the DMAT concept to quickly organize and respond to incidents. Knowing the critical importance of such an organization, Dr. Wallace then met with local professional medical organization members to generate interest for the Oklahoma team, the only one in the state. Depending on the state's size, others utilize numerous DMATs, such as California, which has nine.

"DMAT requires federal declaration to activate," said Dr. Wallace, "but by affiliating volunteers with MRC we can also respond with state and local assistance as needed." For example, this past winter's ice storm prompted DMAT response in the panhandle to supplement healthcare facilities on site.

Funded by HHS and some private/corporate donations (such as Kerr-McGee), DMAT falls under the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), while maintaining, storing and transporting all its own equipment, supplies, shelters, generators, lights and other requirements to immediately establish fully operational emergency medical facilities.

Operated as part of the Federal Response Plan, NDMS works as a cooperative effort of the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, Federal Emergency Management Agency, state and local governments and the private sector. Not a replacement for state and local disaster planning efforts, NDMS supplements and assists where state and local medical resources are overwhelmed and federal assistance is requested.

The NDMS provides medical assistance in disaster areas in the form of Disaster Medical

Assistance Teams (DMATs), medical supplies and equipment; patient evacuation, for those that cannot be cared for locally, to designated locations throughout the United States; and hospitalization in a network of medical care facilities that have agreed to accept patients. The NDMS currently includes 107 metropolitan areas throughout the nation.

Designed to care for as many as 100,000 victims of any incident that exceeds the medical care capability of an affected state, region or federal health care system, NDMS may be used in a variety of emergency events, such as an earthquake, hurricane, industrial disaster, refugee influx, terrorist activity or military casualties evacuated to the United States.

Serving under NDMS while activated for a federal response provides several advantages to DMAT members, including: workers' compensation coverage for death or disability due to injury during the performance of official duties; licensing reciprocity for healthcare professionals and technical personnel during operations outside

Dr. Wallace, who was part of the Katrina DMAT response in New Orleans' Super Dome. "We were the first DMAT on site, arriving within 12 hours," he said, adding that the team was sent to Texas for Hurricane Rita when DMAT acted as the hospital emergency center on site of an incapacitated facility. He went with the team to Florida for Hurricane Wilma when they had to set up emergency services in a hospital parking lot near Ft. Lauderdale when damages shut its operations down.

Deployments of 35 to 40 personnel typically average two weeks. Additional Oklahoma DMAT deployments to major disasters include Hurricane Ivan (2004), the World Trade Center following the September 11, 2001 attacks, Houston Flooding caused by Tropical Storm Allison (2001), the Oklahoma City area tornadoes (1999), Hurricane Marilyn, St. Thomas, USVI (1995), Oklahoma City Murrah Federal Building Bombing (1995) and Hurricane Andrew (1992). The team has also assisted in the NDMS response regarding the Atlanta Olympics (1996), Northeast Blizzard (1998) and the Kosovo Refugee Reception (1999) to



Oklahoma: Federal Tort Claims Act protection against personal liability for members within the scope of their employment; and, compensation for team members during federal activations.

"I've never been involved with a group of people that work so well together, that are so self-supporting and efficient and who accomplish so much," said Dr. Wallace of his DMAT experiences. "You never want to see disasters or crises strike, but we know that when they do, we can immediately respond, do what needs to be done and help at the most critical times."

Statewide, three MRC DMAT exercises in 2006 covered establishment of special needs shelters for "victims" who are not good candidates for traditional shelters, such as elderly in assisted living or nursing centers or people with medical conditions requiring special equipment such as oxygen or dialysis. Held in Tahlequah, Tulsa and Ponca City, the efforts addressed such special needs scenarios, where organizers worked with local officials to educate them on what those needs would be — how much space should be allocated, determining shelter footprints and what kind of logistics is involved and how to log and track special needs victims.

"Looking back at our hurricane evacuee experience, we knew how fast we had to react with local officials to help those victims," said

name a few. Dr. Wallace spent two weeks in New York City after the September 11 terrorist attacks helping care for countless Ground Zero recovery team members working out of the collapsed World Trade Center, including fire fighters and construction authorities. "I'd never responded to anything of that scale," recalled Dr. Wallace. "It was just indescribably tragic."

In addition to emergency response, OK-1 maintains team readiness by providing real-time medical support at major events such as Sail Boston and air shows throughout the Midwestern United States. It also participates in informational programs to educate Oklahomans about disaster preparedness. Quarterly team meetings also present orientations for prospective members. Efforts are underway to streamline DMAT volunteer applications online, which is pending as of MRC Monitor press time.

"OK-1 DMAT members take pride in representing all Oklahomans, as we stand ready to respond to the medical needs of our state and nation in times of disaster," Dr. Wallace said.

For more information about volunteering with the MRC OK-1 DMAT Team, contact Oklahoma MRC's State Administrator Kendal Darby at (405) 297-7055.

POST THIS 2007 SCHEDULE!

Oklahoma Medical Reserve Corps - Training Schedule

All MRC Meetings Begin at 6 p.m. (Chickasha at 7 p.m.)

Training for August MRC Meetings

Saturday, August 4 – Basic Disaster Life Support (Tulsa City County Health Department)

Monday & Tuesday, August 6-7 – Tulsa (Tulsa City County Health Department)

OKC TULSA BADGING

Friday, August 10 – Tulsa (Tulsa City County Health Department)

OKC TULSA BADGING

Tuesday, August 14 – Oklahoma City (Bone and Joint Hospital)

"Point of Dispensing (POD) Team Training: A Process Overview"

OCCHD—Mary Steiner, RN, BSN, and Elizabeth Baldwin, RN, BSN

A general overview of POD operations, what is expected of volunteers, a review of set-up, organization charts, reporting process for shift changes, safety considerations and issues, communications, supply, fixed site vs. drive-thru site, how the mental health team fits in, chain of command

OKC MRC BADGING

Thursday, August 16 – Chickasha (Grady Memorial Hospital)

Tuesday, August 21 – Tulsa (Tulsa City County Health Department)

Western Shelter Training

OKC TULSA BADGING

Tuesday, August 28 – Lawton (Great Plains Technology Center Auditorium)

LAWTON MRC BADGING

Training for September MRC Meetings

Tuesday, September 11 – Oklahoma City (Bone and Joint Hospital)

"Medical Reserve Corps and Oklahoma City-County Health Department: Partners in Emergency Response"

OCCHD – Carol F. Smith, MLS, Bioterrorism and Emergency Response Educator

From Bioterrorism to Pandemic Flu – learn about Oklahoma City-County Health Department's Emergency Response efforts and the vital role the Oklahoma Medical Reserve Corps plays in it, as one of OCCHD's most important partners

Thursday, September 13 – Creek County MRC Orientation Kickoff

Tuesday September 18 – Tulsa (Tulsa City County Health Department)

Thursday, September 20 – Grady County

Western Shelter Training (Location and time to be announced)

Thursday, September 25 – Lawton (Great Plains Technology Center Auditorium)

Thursday, September 27 – McAlester (Regional Hospital Cafeteria Conference Room)

Training for October MRC Meetings

Tuesday, October 9 – Oklahoma City (Bone and Joint Hospital)

Tuesday, October 16 – Tulsa (Tulsa City County Health Department)

Thursday, October 18 – Chickasha (Grady Memorial Hospital)

Tuesday, October 23 – Lawton (Great Plains Technology Center Auditorium)



For more information log on to www.medicalreservecorps.gov or www.okmrc.org

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*For more information about the EMSA Disaster Preparedness Division, the Oklahoma Medical Reserve Corps or
 Regional Medical Response System, call Kendal Darby at 405-297-7055.*