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Upcoming Conferences and Training

2nd Annual Emergency Preparedness Conference: Disaster Readiness on the Home Front. October 19-20, 2006 in Washington, D.C. Sponsored by the Joint Commission Resources, Occupational Safety and Health Administration and American Red Cross. For more information, visit www.jcrinc.com/education.asp?durki=11641.

Citizen Engagement in Emergency Planning for a Flu Pandemic. October 23, 2006 in Washington, D.C. Sponsored by the Disasters Roundtable of the National Academies. Visit <http://dels.nas.edu/dr/f18.shtml> for more information.

American Public Health Association 134th Annual Meeting. November 4-8, 2006 in Boston, MA. For more information, visit www.apha.org/meetings/.

2006 Disaster Mental Health Conference. November 8-11, 2006 in Casper, WY. Sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Region Disaster Mental Health Institute. For more information, visit www.rmrinstitute.org/call2006.pdf.

IAEM Annual Conference and EMEX Exposition. November 12-15, 2006 in Orlando, FL. Sponsored by the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM). For more information, visit www.iaem.com.

Emergency Preparedness and Response Conference (for People with Disabilities, the Elderly, Pediatrics and Animals). December 13-14, 2006 in Washington, D.C. Sponsored by the Homeland Defense Journal and the National Organization on Disability. For more information, visit http://www.homelanddefensejournal.com/hdl/conf_emergencypreparedness.htm.

9th World Conference on Stress, Trauma, and Coping. February 14-18, 2007 in Baltimore, MD. Sponsored by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF). Visit www.9thworldcongress.org/ for more information.

Highlights of Local MRC Activities

Macoupin County, IL MRC

- The Macoupin County MRC is currently in the process of preparing their 17 volunteers to assist the Macoupin County Health Department with flu clinics scheduled for October 21, 2006. They will be operating three flu clinics simultaneously throughout the county.

McHenry County, IL MRC

- McHenry County MRC volunteers participated in multi-county disaster mental health, CPR and ICS training over the summer.
- McHenry County MRC volunteers distributed newspaper inserts throughout the county addressing pandemic flu.
- Many McHenry County MRC volunteers have trained on a computerized appointment program and answered phones for our flu clinic phone bank.

- On November 15, 2006, MRC volunteers will participate in a meeting/training dealing with stress management.

Maine Township, IL Regional MRC

- The Maine Township Regional MRC is the first of its kind in Illinois, i.e., a non-county-based regional group that serves five communities and more than 200,000 residents.
- To date, the Maine Township Regional MRC has recruited over 600 volunteers (with a target goal of 2,400).
- In the past three months, the Maine Township Regional MRC has participated in 10 healthcare education initiatives.
- The Maine Township Regional MRC has participated in a tabletop exercise with the communities in its region.

Palatine, IL MRC

- Palatine MRC and CERT members are working with the Palatine Fire Department to form a volunteer response team to assist firefighters with rehab during large incidents. The goal is to have the team trained and operational by November 2006.
- Palatine MRC is a member of the new state-wide organization, MRC Illinois (MRCIL). This group is working to promote MRCs in Illinois, share training and pursue sustainability opportunities for the good of all members.
- The Palatine MRC assisted in staffing an MRCIL information booth at the annual Illinois EMA conference in Springfield, IL on September 5-7, 2006.
- The Palatine MRC held a Core Disaster Life Support (CDLS) class for members on September 23, 2006.
- The Palatine MRC will have an MRC/CERT information booth at the annual Palatine Fire Department Open House on October 7, 2006. They will also display their combined CERT/MRC/EMA response trailer at this event.

Kent County, MI MRC

- The Kent County MRC participated in the East Grand Rapids full-scale exercise on September 20, 2006. MRC volunteers moulaged 50 students in the criminal justice and healthcare programs from Kent County Career & Technical Center for the exercise, and were subsequently invited to address teaching moulage to the cosmetology students at the Center.
- The Kent County MRC is participating in a health fair on October 17-18, 2006 conducted by the Alliance for Health in Grand Rapids, MI. It is a two-day program in which MRC members will be recruiting volunteers and demonstrating moulaging as a draw for health fair attendees.
- The Kent County MRC is scheduled to participate in a Michigan Region 6 pandemic flu exercise on October 25, 2006.

Michigan Region 7 MRC

- The Michigan Region 7 MRC (R7MRC) was recently approved. Because the unit is new, it does not have any members yet. The MRC unit will consist of a regional "umbrella" program with local/sub-regional coordinators in their 18-county region.
- The unit's immediate plan is to aggressively recruit and train volunteers over the next two months; the unit plans to develop recruiting materials (Web presence, brochures, posters, PSAs, etc.) and conduct training around the region.
- This MRC unit is key to the implementation of the Modular Emergency Medical System (MEMS) in Region 7, a major component of the State of Michigan's response to the need for surge medical resources. The R7MRC will serve as a critical component to the staffing plan for MEMS resources, such as Alternate Care Centers, Neighborhood Emergency Help Centers, Casualty Transport Systems, Community Outreach efforts, etc.
- The R7MRC will also be a resource for community events, such as the National Cherry Festival, the Mackinac Bridge Walk, the 2007

National Governors Association annual meeting, etc.

Schoolcraft County, MI MRC

- The Schoolcraft County MRC participated in a June 13, 2006 pandemic flu exercise which also included CERT, the county emergency management agency, EMS, law enforcement, tribal officials, the hospital and county health department.
- The Schoolcraft County MRC members participated in a 24 hour highway watch for trucks hauling hazardous materials.
- On October 25, 2006, the Schoolcraft County MRC will participate in a drive through flu vaccination exercise.
- On November 1, 2006, the Schoolcraft County MRC will participate in a hospital exercise involving the setting up of MRC and CERT equipment.
- Also in November, the Schoolcraft County MRC will be taping a promotional DVD for the Schoolcraft County Citizen Corps.

Northeastern Minnesota Responds MRC

- The Northeastern Minnesota Responds MRC, serving seven counties, was formed in July 2006.
- Information on the MRC was mailed to 7,500 health professionals (doctors, dentists, nurses, LPNs and pharmacists) in August, and the MRC unit now has 422 registered volunteers.
- The Northeastern Minnesota Responds MRC is now preparing to conduct training in all seven counties it serves.

Champaign County, OH MRC

- On September 11, 2006, the Champaign County MRC, along with numerous partner organizations in the community, participated in an emergency preparedness health fair called "Together We Prepare."

- The Champaign County MRC is participating in a "drive-through" mass immunization clinic on October 25, 2006 at the Champaign County Fairgrounds.

Coshocton County, OH MRC

- On September 25, 2006, the Coshocton County MRC participated in a training session that covered pandemic flu, SNS, mass clinics and ICS/NIMS.

Harrison County, OH MRC

- The first meeting of the Harrison County MRC was held June 22, 2006. Due to a storm in the early morning hours, the building in which the meeting was being held was without power. The MRC held its meeting with flashlights and experienced "first hand" how things can go wrong, even with the best of planning. According to the MRC coordinator, the situation actually added to the effectiveness of the meeting and the MRC unit's purpose.
- The Harrison County MRC was also represented at the Harrison County Fair on July 10-14, 2006. The MRC had a display with information on the MRC and how it will be used in the event of an emergency.

Lucas County, OH MRC

- On August 4, 2006, Lucas County MRC volunteers participated in a "Just-in-Time" training/mass dispensing exercise to test their SNS plan. This all-day event utilized 150 MRC members.
- Lucas County MRC has worked with the University of Toledo and Owens Community College to develop a student MRC at each school. These groups are for students pursuing licensure in health care fields and are intended to bring them into the volunteer arena early in their careers.
- A third installment of "Introduction to the Medical Reserve Corps," a state approved, four hour, local training for MRC volunteers was held on September 19, 2006 at Owens Community College. The total number of participants was 110, which included members of the Lucas

County MRC, Wood County MRC and both student MRCs. This training can be made available online (it is projected to be available online in the spring of 2007). 488 of 971 registered volunteers with the Lucas County MRC have completed this state-approved training.

Miami County, OH MRC

- Recently, Miami County MRC members staffed an information booth at a mall in Piqua, Ohio. Volunteers distributed information about the MRC, as well as a family readiness program called SMRTE (Survival Meals Ready to Eat) Jugs.
- Two Miami County MRC members recently attended a training offered by the Defiance County MRC on the psychosocial aspects of a disaster. The Miami County MRC is planning to conduct a similar training course in Miami County.

Preble County, OH MRC

- The Preble County MRC will offer family readiness training for MRC volunteers on November 22, 2006. For more information on emergency preparedness, visit their website at www.preblecountyhealth.org.

Wood County, OH

- The Wood County MRC was formed in August 2006 and now has approximately 30 volunteers.
- Recently, 19 Wood County MRC volunteers participated in training with the Lucas County, OH MRC in an "Introduction to the Medical Reserve Corps" course.

Brown County, WI

- The Brown County MRC currently has six members, and has held two meetings focusing on program development and leadership.
- The Brown County MRC participated in the Brown County Homeland Security Expo on May 6, 2006. This event showcased to the general public how grant funding has been utilized in the community. Along with the local Citizen Corps

Council, the Brown County MRC staffed an informational display.

- The Brown County MRC participated in a U.S. Postal Service Biohazard Detection System exercise on May 18, 2006. MRC members were familiarized with decontamination procedures and mass dispensing operations.
- On June 26, 2006, MRC members participated in a full-scale exercise at the Resch Center (sports/entertainment complex) which simulated a traumatic event at a large indoor concert. Five MRC members tracked teenage "patients" who were transported to four local hospitals.
- On August 9, 2006, Brown County MRC members participated in an exercise at the Austin Straubel International Airport. Unit volunteers wrote 50 symptomology tags for "victims" of a simulated aircraft accident and served as exercise "victims."
- The Brown County MRC has also created a website which can be accessed at www.bccitizencorps.org (click on "Charter Programs").

NACCHO-MRC Cooperative Agreement

In August 2006, the MRC Program Office entered into a Cooperative Agreement with the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to assist with capacity building for the MRC program. NACCHO has developed a fact sheet on this Cooperative Agreement which provides background information on NACCHO and the goals of the collaboration between the two organizations. Information from the NACCHO fact sheet is presented below.

How has the NACCHO worked with the MRC?

In 2005-2006, NACCHO convened a work group of MRC leaders and key partners from across the country to develop a list of core competencies for MRC volunteers. The list was distributed at the MRC National Conference in April 2006 and is available on NACCHO's website at <http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MedicalReserveCorps.cfm>. Additional resources to support the use of the core competencies are in development.

What are the goals of the Cooperative Agreement between NACCHO and the MRC Program?

The overarching goal of the Cooperative Agreement awarded to NACCHO in August 2006 is to strengthen the ties between the MRC program at all levels and the nation's public health system. NACCHO will work closely with the MRC program office, regional, state and local MRC coordinators, and other key partners to ensure that the collaboration is successful and that it supports the capacity of local MRC units. The Cooperative Agreement includes three primary objectives:

1. Promote the MRC through NACCHO networks - NACCHO will promote the visibility of the MRC to public health leaders and practitioners by including MRC information in NACCHO's newsletters, organizing MRC-related sessions for conferences, conducting online training for health departments about working with the MRC, and developing a national MRC newsletter.
2. Support MRC operations with capacity-building assistance - NACCHO will provide travel scholarships for attendance at regional and national MRC meetings, and capacity-development "mini-grants" to new and existing MRC units. NACCHO, MRC regional coordinators and the MRC program office are currently working together to develop eligibility criteria, an application process, time line, and dissemination plan for funds. NACCHO will also continue to provide assistance with the implementation of core competencies for volunteers and the planning for regional meetings.
3. Support the Development of the Public Health Service (PHS) Auxiliary Concept - NACCHO will collaborate with MRC and PHS leaders on the development of a concept of operations and guidance manual for members. A demonstration project will be developed and evaluated. NACCHO will facilitate cross-training exercises with PHS teams as part of the demonstration project.

What about MRC units that are not housed in health departments?

Although NACCHO primarily represents local health departments, this Cooperative Agreement will benefit all

MRC units regardless of the organization that houses them. All MRC units will be eligible to apply for the capacity building assistance. Through this project, we hope to help strengthen the relationships between all of the organizations involved in the MRC mission.

What does this Cooperative Agreement mean for local MRC units?

While the implementation plan for this Cooperative Agreement is still in development, local MRC units can expect support from NACCHO on issues such as:

1. Funding support for travel to MRC national and regional conferences.
2. Capacity Development mini-grants.
3. Technical assistance for implementation of core competencies for volunteers.
4. Additional marketing assistance on local, regional, and national levels, as well as a new avenue to promote the MRC through the nation's public health infrastructure.
5. Support with the development of the PHS Auxiliary for those units that will be involved in the demonstration project.
6. Guidance on working with local health departments for units housed within other agencies, organizations, or institutions.

Whom can I contact to learn more?

For more information about the NACCHO-MRC Cooperative Agreement, please contact Emily Cohen, Program Associate, at ecohen@naccho.org or (202) 783-5550 ext. 269. You may also contact Gary Brown, Regional MRC Coordinator, at gary.brown@hhs.gov or (816) 426-2829.

Bikers to the Rescue!

*Article provided by the Kane County, IL Health Department (edited for newsletter).

The ability of a motorcycle to travel where a four-wheeled vehicle cannot makes it the ideal form of transportation during an emergency. In a disaster such as a tornado, a weather phenomenon all-too common in the Midwest, tree limbs and building debris will be everywhere, including streets and highways. Hours,

even days, will pass before the routes are cleared for emergency traffic.

Enter the "Rescue Riders," a group of local bikers who have volunteered to be members of the Kane County MRC. The first group of bikers began their MRC training learning about some of the fundamental principles of first aid. When they complete their second session, they will be certified according to the 2005 American Heart Association's guidelines. The training was conducted by the husband and wife team of Belinda and John Guglielmo, both of whom are firefighter/paramedics and MRC volunteers. The training took place at the Trinity Christian Vineyard Fellowship Church in St. Charles, in space provided by Pastor Dan Rak, himself a volunteer with the MRC.

Dean Akey, a St. Charles business owner, is the founder of the Rescue Riders program as well as the founder of Biker4Biker, a not-for-profit group that works to coordinate fund-raising efforts for area motorcyclists and their families in need of help. Akey and other riders, some wearing leather chaps and other Harley-Davidson gear, began what may be the first-ever disaster training for motorcyclists.

Because the concept is so new, ideas on how to use the riders keep cropping up. Beyond the obvious enhanced mobility of a motorcycle, which would deliver medicines, vaccines, medical personnel and equipment to areas inaccessible to normal traffic, Akey sees his group able to assist the MRC in other ways. For example, downed power lines would present an obvious but hazardous obstacle. But why have firefighters or police officers guarding the lines when their services could better used elsewhere? The Rescue Riders could be trained to spot, track and protect the public from the downed power lines, freeing up first responders to concentrate on immediate threats. "There's a lot that we can do to help other organizations," Akey said. "At the end of the day, I think we have the potential to be more than just a shuttle service." Patrick DeMoon, Kane County MRC Coordinator, contacted Dean Akey with the idea of training motorcycle riders to make use of their increased mobility in the event of a natural disaster or terrorist attack. "What better group than bikers who are already helping people?" DeMoon said.

The Kane County Health Department established one of the first MRC units in the country. The Kane County MRC is a group of several hundred dedicated volunteers. They are local physicians, dentists, veterinarians, nurses, pharmacists and other community residents. During a disaster, the biker volunteers would

be in a position to enhance the mobility of the other MRC volunteers.

For more information on the Rescue Riders program, please visit the Biker4Biker website at www.biker4biker.org. More information on the Kane County MRC can be found at the Kane County Health Department's website (www.kanehealth.com).



Members of the Rescue Riders participate in a training session sponsored by the Kane County MRC



Members of the Rescue Riders learn to provide first aid to a moulaged "victim"

Comments and suggestions regarding this newsletter are welcome and encouraged. Please submit them to Gary Brown, Acting MRC Regional Coordinator, Region V, at gary.brown@hhs.gov.