



MRC ★ In Touch

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Psychological First Aid Training—Is Your MRC Unit Ready?

Hurricane season 2009 officially began on June 1st. It is important that you use this time to reenergize your volunteers for a possible response and assess your MRC unit's capability to assist survivors during the aftermath of a disaster or an act of terrorism through Psychological First Aid (PFA).

PFA is delivered by mental health and other disaster response workers to help survivors address immediate needs and concerns, following an act of terrorism or a disaster. MRC units may be called upon to provide PFA at acute care facilities, special needs shelters, and more.

To ensure the national MRC capital region is prepared to deliver PFA, on June 27, 2009, the Fairfax County (VA) MRC unit will be hosting a one-day program about Disaster and Crisis Mental Health at the Fairfax County Government Center. The unit has invited other regional MRC volunteers to participate in this event, along with police chaplains, the Red Cross, and many others. The training was developed in partnership with the local community service board and the Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services (DMHMRSAS). The training is grant-funded and participants will receive five continuing education units from the Fairfax Falls Church Community Services Board.

Dianne Quebral, MRC unit leader of Fairfax County, says her unit will also be preparing an online PFA training that will be offered via the Virginia TRAIN system. The training is open for all MRC volunteers and is a training requirement for anyone in a mental health/counselor position, as part of the Fairfax MRC core training.

Tips

1. Read the "PFA MRC Field Operations Guide" at: <http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MRC/resources/tools.cfm>

2. To view an online training course, visit: <http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MRC/resources/training.cfm>
3. For more information about PFA, visit the CDC Web site at: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/states.asp>
4. Host a PFA "quiz night" with your MRC unit to determine how well prepared your unit is to provide PFA to victims of a disaster.
5. Create a wallet card for MRC volunteers that contains quick tips about PFA and self-care during emergencies.

MRC/NACCHO Connections



Summer = Recreational Water Illnesses

The wait is finally over and families can begin to enjoy the summer poolside. However, with millions of swimming pools located in both public and residential areas of the U.S., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has seen an increase in the number of recreational water illnesses (RWIs) among nationwide swimmers.

RWIs are spread by contacting, swallowing, or even breathing contaminated water. To ensure your local community or residential pool is safe for use, check the pH, chlorine, and other disinfectant levels each day; for community pools, find out what grade the pool received from the health inspector. In addition, MRC units can decrease the risk of RWIs by distributing brochures and fact sheets around the community to promote safety and healthy hygiene before entering a water recreational area. To get involved or learn more about the CDC's efforts toward providing guidelines and safety at swimming pools, visit: http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/MAHC/model_code.htm to read about the Model Aquatic Health Code.

For more information and promotional materials about swimming safety and how to prevent RWIs, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/>.

Announcements



Tools and Resources to Help Communities Prepare for Hurricane Season

June 1st kicked off the start of hurricane season. Be sure that your community and family are prepared for a hurricane or other natural disasters by visiting the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's (AHRQ) Web site for information about mass evacuation transportation, nursing homes in public health emergencies, and

much more.

Click on the below link for more information. _

<http://www.ahrq.gov/prep/hurricane.htm>

Attend NACCHO Annual 2009

Register now for NACCHO Annual 2009 set for July 29–31, 2009 in sunny Orlando, Florida! The Preliminary Program highlights MRC activities and accomplishments that will be featured at three poster sessions and at a session entitled "Surgeon General Says..." View the Preliminary Program at: <http://www.naccho.org/events/nacchoannual2009/index.cfm>. In addition, there will be 21 other sessions including poster sessions and networking events, focused on public health preparedness. Register today! Early bird rates are good through June 23, 2009. Don't miss out!

Click on the below link for more information. _

<http://www.regonline.com/checkin.asp?eventid=687718>

Capacity Building Awards

MRC units that were awarded a Capacity Building Award in Year 3 (2008-2009) have received notifications and contracts. Signed contracts are due to NACCHO on July 20, 2009 in order for NACCHO to process contracts and send checks by July 31st. If you did not receive a contract, or if your agency is experiencing a delay in processing it, please contact Justine Uhlenbrock at juhlenbrock@naccho.org

To submit information for either MRC: In Touch or MRC: In Focus, please contact Megan Skupien at mskupien@naccho.org or (202) 783-1376.



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