



MRC ★ In Touch

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Featured Article

Minnesota Veterinary MRC Unit Prepares for Radiation Response

The Minnesota Veterinary Medical Reserve Corps (MVMRC) is a statewide unit of volunteers who respond to animal disease emergencies, natural disasters, and bioterrorism. The unit is composed of mostly veterinarians, veterinary technicians and assistants, and students. A critical goal of the unit is to ensure there is a plan for animals in case of a nuclear accident, in which radioactive material is released from a nearby nuclear power plant.

In 2009, 20 MVMRC volunteers and a dozen live dogs and stuffed animal cats participated in a radiation preparedness exercise at the Monticello Nuclear Power Plant Reception Center in Rogers, MN. The exercise was prompted due to the MVMRC unit's coordination of the animal reception center portion of the Radiation Emergency Preparedness (REP) Program Reception Centers. Animal reception centers monitor and decontaminate pets in case of an evacuation (due to radioactive material in the environment); animal reception centers are set up in conjunction with human reception centers.

To jump-start the exercise, an alert was sent to the State Emergency Operations Center. Next, the human and animal reception centers opened. Then, volunteers and animals were brought to the animal reception center where animals were registered; radioactive contamination was monitored; and the animals underwent simulated decontamination. In addition, the call up system and protocols for registration, monitoring, decontamination, and the reunification of animals and owners were also simulated during the exercise.

Prior to the radiation exercise, volunteers received mandatory "Right to Know" training about basic radiation physics, personal safety, and monitoring equipment and techniques. This training lasted approximately two hours and included the use of a lab with monitoring equipment for animals and workers.

The unit has coordinated animal reception centers since 2004. The MVMRC unit was activated this past spring in response to floods in Fargo, ND. At the request of the North Dakota State Veterinarian,

several veterinarians and vet technicians were deployed to set up an animal facility in Valley City, ND.

Tips

1. If there are nuclear facilities in your area, develop radiation preparedness plans.
2. MRC units should work with nearby nuclear power plants to coordinate yearly exercises.
3. Encourage MRC volunteers to have preparedness plans for their pets. For details, visit the CDC's Pet Preparedness Web page at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/petprotect.asp>.
4. Make sure that your MRC is up-to-date on the latest radiation emergency information. For more information, visit the CDC's Radiation Emergency Web page at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/radiation/>.

MRC/NACCHO Connections

Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control

On June 22, 2009, Congress passed the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, a federal law that gives the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the power to regulate the tobacco industry.

NACCHO is currently working with partner organizations to help develop and promote policy initiatives to increase the integration of national, state, and local tobacco control efforts.

To discover what NACCHO is doing to keep families smoke-free or how to become smoke-free, visit: <http://www.naccho.org/topics/HPDP/tobacco/Index.cfm>.

MRC units can help prevent smoking by engaging in the following activities:

- Distributing smoking cessation information to the community;
- Participating in "National Kick Butts Day" <http://www.kickbuttsday.org> on March 24, 2010;
- Encouraging your community to sign up for the Tobacco Prevention newsletter by visiting: <http://www.naccho.org/topics/HPDP/tobacco/distributionlist.cfm>;
- Giving presentations to students at schools about the harmful effects of smoking;

- Discovering how your state ranks on tobacco control and sharing this information with your community; and
- Distributing information at health fairs about smoking cessation.

Announcements

Capacity Building Awards (CBA) Announcement

CBA applications are currently being reviewed. Award notifications will be sent via e-mail in January 2010. If you have questions, please visit the NACCHO Web site at: <http://www.naccho.org/mrccba>, or contact Chicquita Hairston at chairston@naccho.org and (202) 507-4224.

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

The 2010 Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness and Response Training Summit will be held May 12-16, 2010 in Nashville, TN. The Web site address for information regarding this training event is <http://www.integratedtrainingsummit.org>.

Poster submissions are currently being accepted for the training summit through Monday, March 1, 2010 5:00 P.M. EST. For additional information, please visit <http://teams.hhs.gov/conference>.

Attend the 2010 Public Health Preparedness Summit

The 2010 Public Health Preparedness Summit, "Partners in Preparedness: Engaging a Community for a Successful Public Health Response," will strengthen and enhance the capabilities of public health professionals and other participants to plan and prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters and other public health emergencies. For more information, visit: <http://www.phprep.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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