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Joint Earthquake Exercise with the Santa Cruz MRC and Local Red Cross Chapter

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Santa Cruz MRC and the Santa Cruz County American Red Cross (ARC) Chapter led to the joint participation of an annual preparedness exercise during the fall, which included the simulation of an earthquake and a school bus crash.

The ARC invited the Santa Cruz MRC to participate in these exercises that were held at the county fairgrounds and at a local church. The objectives of the exercise were to train volunteers to open and operate a shelter; practice radio communications; provide hands-on skills training; and more.

The four-hour exercise included Red Cross operations such as the following:

- Opening and operating a food preparation facility;
- Opening and managing a shelter operation;
- Client services registration and assessment;
- Medical and behavioral health screening; and
- Stabilization and treatment of 25 mock patients.

The exercise was simulated through a written scenario that was distributed to all registrants at the sign-in/staging site. The scenario involved an earthquake that registered a 7.9 on the Richter scale where close to 5,000 residents were affected with many displaced from their home.

The ARC was requested to open a shelter and call on volunteers, including the MRC unit. Approximately 90 participants participated in the event, including at least 15 MRC volunteers, U.S. Naval Sea Cadets, and others. The volunteers played the role of having a medical or behavioral health problem such as a severe anxiety attack, an unexpected birth, limb injuries, and more.

At the shelter, volunteers registered victims, conducted behavioral and physical assessments, took vital signs, gave medical/nursing advice, cohorted and isolated "flu" victims, made "mock" referrals to

hospitals through simulated ambulance calls, gave verbal prescription orders, treated acting patients, and more.

Although this was the Santa Cruz MRC unit's first joint exercise with the ARC Chapter, there was limited joint planning prior to the event. The MRC coordinator, David McNutt says, "The exercise was successful and increased the volunteers' awareness of the success of the MRC-ARC MOU." Volunteers of the MRC now have a better grasp of the policies and procedures that are needed to make such a partnership work. In addition, many ARC volunteers who participated in the exercise joined the MRC.

Tips

1. Develop a template memorandum of understanding with your local Red Cross chapter.
2. To view a sample MOU template with a Red Cross Chapter, visit: http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MRC/resources/upload/MOU_Local_ARC-MRC-1.pdf.
3. Encourage MRC volunteers to establish relationships with other volunteer organizations in the community.

MRC/NACCHO Connections

Foodborne Illnesses

It is estimated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), that more than 325,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths each year are caused by foodborne illnesses.

NACCHO and the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) co-chair the Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response (CIFOR) with support from the CDC. NACCHO works with the CIFOR to reduce foodborne illnesses. CIFOR released the *Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response Guidelines*, which provides information and resources for anyone working in food safety programs.

To learn more about CIFOR, visit: <http://www.cifor.us/projgl.cfm>.

To view the Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response Guidelines, visit: <http://www.naccho.org/topics/environmental/foodsafety/upload/CIFOR-Guidelines-for-Foodborne-Disease-Outbreak-Response-updated-3.pdf>.

For more information about NACCHO's work with food safety and ideas on how to get your MRC unit involved, visit: <http://www.naccho.org/topics/environmental/foodsafety/index.cfm>.

Announcements

Call for NACCHO Annual Session Proposals

There's still time to submit your session proposal for NACCHO Annual 2010! For submission details, visit: <http://www.naccho.org/na2010/proposals>. All proposals are due by January 29 at 5:00 P.M. EST and should address this year's forward-looking theme, "20/20 Public Health Vision: Prevention, Equity, Leadership." NACCHO Annual 2010 is set for July 14-16, in Memphis, TN, and is the year's largest gathering of local health officials in the U.S. For questions or additional information, contact the NACCHO Annual Speaker Coordinator at nacchospeakers@conferencemanagers.com or (703) 964-1240, Ext. 11.

Don't miss this chance to share your knowledge and expertise with colleagues from across the country.

H1N1 Stories from the Field

NACCHO has been collecting stories from the field from local health departments nationwide. Discover what practices have worked for health departments and what lessons were learned during the H1N1 response. You can also submit your own story from the field. http://www.naccho.org/topics/H1N1/stories_search.cfm

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>.

"In Focus" Readership Survey Results Available

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the readership survey for the MRC quarterly newsletter, "In Focus." We will continue to ensure "In Focus" is meeting the needs of its readers. To view results of the survey, visit the link below.

<http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MRC/resources/reports.cfm>

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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