



MRC ★ In Touch

In This Issue:

Featured Articles

MRC/NACCHO Connections

Announcements

CALENDAR



December—Safe Toys and Gifts Month

LINKS

MRC

NACCHO

Featured Articles

Yavapai County MRC Supports Nuclear Blast Exercise

MRC volunteers in Yavapai County (AZ) participated in the Vigilant Guard, a state-wide exercise involving a nuclear blast from a deadly terrorist attack. This exercise tested the preparedness and response efforts of 8,000 workers, including first responders, hospital staff, volunteers, and also the surge capacity of hospitals and health departments in 15 counties.

The exercise took place in downtown Phoenix—where a real nuclear blast would cause tens of thousands of injuries and fatalities, and the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of residents. This exercise tested the preparedness of rural counties that would need to be ready to care for casualties and contaminated evacuees.

During the exercise, 25 MRC volunteers performed various roles in conjunction with county public health, hospitals, the Red Cross, and a hazardous materials team from a local fire department.

The volunteers worked in a warehouse generating pick lists from a Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) delivery that filled orders for four local hospitals and a special needs shelter. Some of the volunteers that worked in the warehouse had prior experience in their roles, while others received just-in-time training the day of the exercise.

MRC volunteers also practiced interviewing the evacuees to collect data for a public health exposure registry, and an MRC nurse worked with the Red Cross Evacuee Reception Center staff to identify which evacuees would need to stay in a special needs shelter. Additionally, the volunteers provided logistical support by assisting with security and crowd and traffic control at the reception center. Another objective of the exercise was determining the staffing needs at hospitals that would be stretched beyond their surge capacity.

Yavapai MRC Director Brian Supalla says, "Volunteers, both medical and non-medical, did great work and quickly assimilated into the response. The warehouse workers showed that they would be able to take a leading role, freeing up public health employees for other duties."

McHenry County MRC Supports Pertussis Hotline

The McHenry County Department of Health MRC participated in a hotline during an outbreak of pertussis in McHenry County (IL). The pertussis outbreak began in October, with the first news announcing eight cases; two weeks later, there were 31 cases; at two more weeks, 71 cases; and less than a week later, 121 pertussis cases. McHenry County is currently going into its third spike and as of December 14, had 226 pertussis cases.

Although the outbreak began in a small cluster at one school, within two weeks it had spread to multiple schools as well as to adults. Pertussis is highly contagious and poses the biggest threat to the very young and the elderly.

Twenty-nine schools have now reported cases of pertussis, and it is believed that the initial mode of transmissions was from school sporting events.

A hotline center was opened and staffed by four MRC volunteers to help the county's Communicable Disease Program manage calls. The health department hotline was publicized throughout the county in newspapers, school Web sites, and the county's Web site. The hotline was held at the health department during November 2–3, with two shifts per day.

McHenry County MRC Liaison, Liz Hackett, says the McHenry County Department of Health is confident in relying on McHenry County MRC volunteers to quickly answer call-outs, and as a result the MRC is now viewed more as a resource for support than it had been in the past.

Hackett adds, "The McHenry County Health Department is working hard to get the message out on how highly contagious pertussis is and how dangerous it is to infants and elderly. Even though we have yet to hit the biggest spike in cases, we don't foresee the public getting any more concerned, unfortunately. There continues to be an average of 30 new cases per week—the MRC volunteers may possibly be called out again to assist with the follow up investigation calls."

MRC/NACCHO Connections

10-Year MRC Anniversary Kicks Off in 2012

In honor of the kick off of the 10th anniversary of the MRC in 2012, NACCHO is supporting the DCVMRC in helping the MRC network to participate in activities to commemorate the 10-year anniversary each month.

Please look for more information to be shared on the DCVMRC listservs in January.

Announcements

The Fall *MRC In Focus* Newsletter is Now Available

The Fall 2011 *MRC In Focus* newsletter is now available on the Division of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps Web site at <http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/pageViewFldr/pageView?path=NewsEvents/InFocus>.

We are currently collecting stories for the Winter 2012 *MRC In Focus*. Send us stories that demonstrate activities you've conducted to improve your MRC's operations such as recruitment events, public health promotion, strategic planning, and etc. Stories with pictures are more likely to be highlighted.

Please submit stories and photos by December 30 for consideration to mrcnewsletter@naccho.org.

Capacity Building Awards

If your MRC unit was awarded the 2011–2012 Capacity Building Award (CBA), you must return the two copies of the signed contracts and Certification of Non-Debarment by March 30, 2012. Contract extensions will not be granted. For questions, e-mail mrc@naccho.org.

Early Bird Rate Ends Soon, Register for the 2012 PHP Summit

The 8th Annual Public Health Preparedness Summit will be held from Tuesday, February 21, 2012 to Friday, February 24, 2012 in Anaheim, CA.

Register today for the early bird rate, which ends on January 17, 2012! The goal of the Summit is to 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.

To register today, visit <http://www.phprep.org/2012/register/>.

Travel Scholarship Application

Please watch the DCVMRC listservs for future announcements about the travel scholarship application.

To submit information for either MRC: In Touch or MRC: In Focus, please contact Megan Skupien at



Sign Up for This Newsletter

mskupien@naccho.org or (202)783-1376.

Click [here](#) to unsubscribe

1100 17th Street, NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, DC 20036