



### Central MN Responds MRC

Local Coordinator for Benton County

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## VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER 2012, ISSUE 2



### OPERATION LOON CALL

On Monday April 30, 2012, the Central MN Responds MRC (Medical Reserve Corps) Unit participated in a statewide exercise, Operation Loon Call.

During Operation Loon Call, a notification was sent from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) asking local coordinators to send a message to all MN Responds MRC Volunteers and to request a response. The message was sent to all phone numbers and email addresses provided by you on your [www.mnresponds.org](http://www.mnresponds.org) profile; the message was open for response for 24 hours.

MDH conducted this exercise for two reasons:

- 1) to see how many Volunteers would respond to a request for availability
- 2) to see how many volunteers would be available to deploy at any given time.



Four local Coordinators from the Central MN Responds MRC Unit, Tony Buttacavoli (Isanti), Pauline Amundson (Pine), Kathy Burski (Kanabec), and Cynthia Poyhonen (Benton) met in Isanti County to facilitate the exercise on behalf of the fourteen county Unit.

The Unit had good results from the exercise, 65% of the 1,200 Central MN Responds MRC Volunteers responded to the request.

308 responded to the phone call, 249 replied via email, 100 called back in response, and 10 responded to the internal message on their online profile.

MDH plans to repeat this exercise next year, and we as a Unit will seek to improve the response rate!

More information on page 2.

*Photos: Tony (top) and Pauline (right) during Operation Loon Call, April 30th.*



#### THIS IS AN EXERCISE

This is a statewide communication drill to help meet state and federal preparedness requirements. We have been asked to send a phone and email message to all volunteers to determine their availability to respond as if it were a real emergency.

This is an exercise, but please respond as if this were a real emergency and you were needed to volunteer. It is understood that you would need additional information to know for sure whether you would be able to volunteer.

Respond to the following prompts to indicate your "likelihood" of availability. If you were asked:

- ◇ I would likely be available to volunteer today if needed
- ◇ I would likely be available to respond within 24 hours
- ◇ I would likely be available to respond within 48 hours
- ◇ I would not likely be available to volunteer

#### THIS IS AN EXERCISE

#### Number of Volunteers indicating they would:

likely be available today	307
likely be available within 24 hours	169
likely be available within 48 hours	71
not be available to volunteer	120
<b>Total Responding</b>	<b>667</b>

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## Division of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps

*Engaging volunteers to strengthen public health, emergency response, and community resiliency.*

This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). The MRC was launched in 2002 after the events of 9/11 brought to light the need for an organized system of medical and public health professionals who could be ready to respond to emergencies, but also help to improve public health on a day-to-day basis. MRC volunteers have the opportunity to participate in both public health and preparedness-related events. In collaboration with local partners, these events not only improve the health of the people in the community—often the young, elderly or underserved—but also improve the members of the MRC unit’s ability to respond in the event of an emergency.

The Medical Reserve Corps program began with 42 units and has grown to a robust network of almost 1,000 units, more than 200,000 volunteers, in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and most of the U.S. territories. Over the past decade, MRC units have helped to meet the emergency needs of their communities by assisting with a variety of small and large-scale responses, such as Hurricane Katrina, the Gulf oil spill, and mass vaccinations for the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus. More recently, MRC volunteers provided support following wildfires in New Mexico, **floods in Minnesota**, and tornadoes in Alabama, Missouri, and Massachusetts.

Since its inception, the MRC’s mission has reflected the priorities of the Surgeon General—increasing disease prevention, eliminating health disparities, improving health literacy, and focusing on becoming a healthy and fit nation. Last year, MRC units across the country reported almost 10,000 local activities conducted by thousands of MRC volunteers that have an effect on millions of people. “The MRC has a tremendous impact

at a very low cost to Federal, state or local government,” says Captain Rob Tosatto, MRC Director in the Office of the Surgeon General. “It has a high return on investment, is value added to the community, and has a direct impact on many individuals.”

The network of MRC volunteers includes medical and public health professionals who provide health care and education for individuals and communities, as well as non-medical volunteers who provide leadership, logistics and other support. MRC units can initiate and participate in public health activities ranging from flu vaccination clinics and smoking cessation initiatives to disease prevention programs like the “*Million Hearts*” (focused on reducing heart disease) and “*Let’s Move!*” (the First Lady’s initiative addressing the challenge of childhood obesity) campaigns. The public health activities can also help to reduce vulnerability and susceptibility in the community, which lessens disaster risks. In general, healthier people are less susceptible to injury and illness following disaster; additionally, minimizing health disparities increases personal and community-wide resiliency.

Medical Reserve Corps volunteers can have a profound impact on the health and safety of their communities. Volunteers can serve as MRC leaders; provide medical care, administer vaccines, and dispense medications; offer health education as part of a local public health initiative; provide counseling for victims, families and responders; promote preparedness; and contribute administrative, communications, and logistical support. For more information about the MRC program, visit [www.medicalreservecorps.gov](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov), [www.facebook.com/medicalreservecorps](http://www.facebook.com/medicalreservecorps), or contact [MRContact@hhs.gov](mailto:MRContact@hhs.gov).



*The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a national network of local groups of volunteers committed to improving the health, safety, and resiliency of their communities. MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals, as well as non-medical volunteers who are interested in strengthening the public health infrastructure and improving the preparedness and response capabilities of their local jurisdictions. The Division of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps (DCVMRC) is headquartered in the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General, and it functions as a clearinghouse for information and best practices to help communities establish, implement, and maintain Medical Reserve Corps units nationwide.*



### Operation Loon Call Results

The Central MN Responds MRC Unit conducted the exercise as a Unit (one call to all 14 counties), MDH requested the results per county. *\*some volunteers affiliate with more than one county.*

Unit Affiliation	# Sent	Acted	Unit Affiliation	# Sent	Acted	Unit Affiliation	# Sent	Acted
Benton	62	55%	Isanti	49	57%	Sherburne	123	58%
Cass	67	43%	Morrison	92	62%	Stearns	145	57%
Chisago	59	42%	Mille Lacs	33	52%	Wadena	36	61%
Crow Wing	178	54%	Pine	59	51%	Wright	238	53%
Kanabec	39	72%	Todd	31	68%	<b>Total*</b>	<b>1211</b>	<b>65%</b>



**Name:** Sally Burg

**Occupation:** Public Health Coordinator

Local Coordinator for Stearns County



**Years in the Central MN Responds MRC Unit:** 2

***What do you do as the Local Coordinator?***

My job as Stearns County Coordinator is to recruit volunteers, monitor the MN Responds MRC website, welcome new volunteers, and provide training and support. I also serve on the Central workgroup.

***What trainings do you provide?*** Stearns and Benton Counties have been teaming up over the last year to provide volunteers with a training opportunity every other month. So far we have offered Orientation, Psychological First Aid, HAZMAT Awareness, Personal & Family Preparedness and Patient Evacuation. In June we offered ICS training. **If there is something you, as a volunteer, would like training on, please let me know!**

We are always interested in adding new trainings to the schedule. Also, there are a lot of other training opportunities throughout our region that our volunteers can participate in.

***Do you have any disaster response experience? If so, what and what did you learn?***

Fortunately there have not been any disasters in my area since I started my position, so I haven't had any disaster response experience yet.

***What is one thing volunteers to Stearns County should know?*** We appreciate your time and commitment to the MN Responds program!! It is invaluable in the times of disaster response.



**Name:** Tom Chaklos Jr.  
**Occupation:** Network Engineer  
**County Unit:** Chisago  
**Years in the Central MN Responds MRC Unit:** New member



**Tell us a little about your response experience:** I have been a First Responder at Medtronic for over 10 years, we respond to any medical emergency at a Medtronic office. We administer oxygen, basic First Aid, and CPR until Paramedics arrive.

**Why did you sign up with MN Responds?** I wanted to be more active in Emergency Care and saw MN Responds as a great opportunity. I look forward to the upcoming Gone with the Wind exercise to improve my skills.

**What trainings/exercises/workshops have you attended as a MRC Volunteer? What have you learned, how has it helped you?** I have completed over 10 online classes gaining new knowledge and insights about emergency care. I also find reading various EMT blogs to be very helpful on dealing with patients and health care in general. It is really helpful to read about how others handle tough situations

**What is in your deployment bag?** Clothing, snacks, water and some books.

**What is one piece of advice you'd give to your fellow volunteers?** Ongoing training, never stop learning, you never can learn too much about a subject. Listen to your patients not just the words but their manner, posture, composure, your gut feelings almost never lie to you. Also when you can teach others that's when you really start to understand & develop your own skills.

**My mom was a nurse but stopped practicing when she had us kids, but that influenced us all to be caregivers from a young age. I stop when I see an accident, I stop and help out as needed, to teach my kids what goes around comes around. When we help others we really are helping ourselves to make a better place for all.**



## Training Schedule Update

Because announcements for trainings are made at all times, and some occur prior to the publishing of the next newsletter, the Central MN Responds MRC Unit has identified a way to keep you updated on available trainings without sending you too many emails.

Log on to your [www.mnresponds.org](http://www.mnresponds.org) profile. Click on the Documents Tab (1).

Under Documents, click on [Administrator to Volunteer Folders](#). Click on the [Central MN Responds MRC Unit](#) link. Then click on the [Training Opportunities](#) (2) link. This information will be updated as new trainings are announced or sent to us.

You can attend any one of these trainings, regardless of location. **Registration is required for trainings** and some locations have size restrictions so call or email for more details or to register.



The screenshot shows the website interface for Minnesota Responds Medical Reserve Corps. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home', 'My Profile', 'Missions', 'Messages (7)', and 'Documents' (highlighted with a yellow '1'). Below this is a 'Document Library' section with a 'Document Library' header and a 'Documents' sub-header. A table lists documents with columns for Name, Size, Created, and Delete. The 'Training Opportunities' document is highlighted with a yellow '2'.

Name	Size	Created	Delete
Central MN Responds MRC Archived Newsle...	11 MB	04/23/2012	
Central MN Responds MRC Coordinators	172.2 KB	01/11/2012	
Central MN Responds MRC Newsletter 2011...	604 KB	01/11/2012	
Central MN Responds MRC Training Guide...	256.7 KB	03/08/2012	
Training Opportunities	1.4 MB	03/08/2012	

After a training, whether in person or online, remember to update your training profile on [www.mnresponds.org](http://www.mnresponds.org) and upload your certificate of completion or send a copy to your county MN Responds MRC Coordinator!

### EXTREME HEAT

In April, the Minnesota Department of Health released *Extreme Heat Toolkit, Public Health Response to Climate Change in Minnesota*. The toolkit provides information to local governments and public health professionals preparing for and responding to extreme heat events.

Extreme heat events are characterized by weather that is substantially hotter and/or more humid than average for a particular location at a particular time, especially in the spring or summer. It is important to plan for extreme heat because there are serious health implications. From 1999 - 2003, in the U.S. 3,442 deaths were attributed to exposure to extreme heat although it is difficult to know the exact number. Heat-related illnesses can cause various symptoms and exacerbate a wide variety of new and existing medical conditions, especially diabetes, respiratory illnesses, and nervous system disorders.

Last summer, there were five heat episodes in MN that were worthy of issuing heat advisories or warnings. On July 19th, a record state dew point temperature (the best measure of how humid it feels) was set in Moorhead at 88°F. The air temperature was 93°F, creating conditions that made it feel like almost 130°F.

To view the entire toolkit, and see heat related illness, their symptoms, and safety tips:

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/climatechange/extremeheat.html>



Heat exhaustion is the most common heat-related illness. Signs and symptoms include dizziness, thirst, fatigue, headache, nausea, visual disturbances, weakness, anxiety, confusion, and vomiting. Treatment involves monitoring the person in a cool, shady environment and ensuring adequate hydration.

**Questions, Comments, and Suggestions**  
for future newsletters please email

Tony.Buttacavoli@co.isanti.mn.us

and write "MN Responds  
Newsletter" in the subject line