

Minnesota Responds



Central Region

Central MN Responds MRC

Local Program Coordinator for **Benton** County

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Lessons Learned from Spring 2011

C. Heltunen - Benton County

Our thoughts and prayers are with those affected by the North Minneapolis Tornado and all of the events occurring around the country.

Partnerships

The American Red Cross (ARC) and the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) have been working together over the past 3 years. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the two national offices in 2009. The MOU simply states that the ARC and the MRC will work together in a disaster. Whether co-habiting in a shelter or assisting with staffing shortages, the two organizations have agreements to rely on each others strengths and resources to accomplish any mission.

This became very important this spring when the ARC opened several shelters in the areas affected by the floods and tornados. ARC volunteers had been activated and deployed and yet the need for workforce continued. They called on the MRC to find additional resources, including staff.

A request came from the Twin Cities ARC chapter to MRC units across Minnesota to identify MRC volunteers who would be willing to register with the Red Cross program in order to assist in these particular incidents. MRC Coordinators encourage volunteers to train and respond with a variety of programs, but remind volunteers that they may receive multiple requests for the same incident and may have to chose which volunteer program to assist with. Our unit was aware of and participated

to some extent to these recent disasters but not in a traditional sense.

Last Minute Notifications

“Why didn’t you tell us about this sooner?” has been a common question to Coordinators this spring. Unfortunately, there is not a good, clean answer.

We passed along trainings pertinent to response, and invitations to others’ conferences and trainings as seats were made available to us. We try to pre-train our volunteers when incidents and activities warrant (i.e. H1N1 and the 2011 Flood); but it is not always possible to do so.

One of the concerns when **deploying** volunteers to a disaster/mission is to ensure their liability is covered. When we received the request by the American Red Cross for volunteers, it was unclear whether you would be deployed as a ‘MRC Volunteer’ or as a ‘American Red Cross Volunteer’. When deployed as an MRC volunteer, it is the requesting agency or jurisdictions’ responsibility for liability coverage, usually through Emergency

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One of the requirements of our grant funding is to send a Unit Coordinator to the Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness and Response Training Summit; this year it was held in Dallas, TX May 1-5. The conference is a collaboration between many national level disaster response organizations. Over 3000 people attend from the Public Health Service, Disaster Medical Assistance Teams, and Medical Reserve Corps, as well as partners from Red Cross and healthcare systems.

The Central MN Responds MRC unit was well represented. Unit Administrator, Tony Buttacavoli, Isanti County, presented a New Leader's Workshop to new Medical Reserve Corps Coordinators. Lisa Beecher, Wright County, and Cynthia Heltunen, Benton County Coordinator, attended with the Federal Deployment Team. Janice Springer, Red Cross, Central MN Chapter, attended as well.

This year's theme was Integration Across Borders: Moving Forward Together. The Surgeon General, Dr. Regina Benjamin, presented the opening keynote address. She talked about the Healthy People 2020 goals and how volunteers can help to achieve them.

The MRC conference participants attended two lunch sessions where they talked about the future of the Medical Reserve Corps. The National Office believes volunteer organizations, such as the MRC, are perfectly positioned to look at health disparities and address obesity in their communities. They are excited about units that are involved in the First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" Campaign as well as other healthy community initiatives.

Dr. Regina Benjamin, the Surgeon General, presented the opening keynote address at the Summit. She talked about the Healthy People 2020 goals and how volunteers can help to achieve them.

During his address, Deputy Surgeon General, Rear Admiral Boris D. Lushniak, M.D., M.P.H., used the following quote:

Volunteers do not get paid not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.
~ Anonymous

It seemed very appropriate as we would not have a unit, definitely not as successful of one, if it wasn't for you the volunteers.

Our volunteers push us to be the most prepared unit we can be, as well as to offer a variety of trainings and opportunities.

Thank you!



Lisa Beecher (gray vest) from Wright County at the Integrated Training Summit

Resources:

Integrated Training Summit: <http://www.integratedtrainingsummit.org/>

Surgeon General's Letter to MRC: <http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/SurgeonGeneralLetter1>

Healthy People 2020: <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/default.aspx>

Let's Move Campaign: <http://www.letsmove.gov/>

Are You Ready? Conference

August 18, 2011

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Arrowwood Resort, Alexandria, MN

MN Responds MRC volunteers are once again invited to attend the **Are You Ready?** Conference, co-sponsored by the Central and West Central Healthcare System Preparedness Programs. This emergency preparedness conference for healthcare system partners is designed to provide health professionals working in clinics, hospitals, long term care facilities, and public health “tools” to improve, inspire, and motivate staff in emergency preparedness planning.

The MN Responds MRC volunteers will have the opportunity to learn what plans healthcare facilities have in place to respond to a variety of incidents, including how they could incorporate volunteers into the response. There will be opportunities to see the tools and ‘toys’ of the Hospital Response Team, as well as an afternoon breakout session specifically for the MN Responds MRC Volunteers.

This year the conference is in Alexandria, MN. As an incentive to go, the Central MN Responds MRC unit will pay for your registration (\$30). We also have a **limited** number of free one night hotel rooms for Wednesday, August 17 (night before the conference, \$135) to help defray lodging costs. These are specifically for our non-paid volunteers attending.

To register go to www.togpartners.com/epc. When you register, choose MN Responds MRC and then the county in which you are a registered MN Responds Volunteer.



MN Behavioral Health Medical Reserve Corps Mobile Field Team

Mission:

The MN Behavioral Health Medical Reserve Corps (MBHMRC) is a statewide group of volunteer behavioral health specialists whose mission is to support global resilience of individuals and communities during disasters.

Purpose:

The purpose of the MBHMRC is to provide expert skills in the area of behavioral health to responders and survivors, to those involved in the Incident Command System, and the larger community in the event of a disaster. Disasters may include, but are not limited to, natural, bioterrorism, pandemics, school emergencies, other health related concerns, etc.

MBHMRC volunteers will promote health, preparedness, response and recovery during the deployment period as well as supporting community and global resilience.

To be selected as a member the following apply:

- Must be an active member of your local MRC
- Must have completed the basic core competency training through MRC
- Must have all licensure verified and copies on file
- Employment verification/workforce check
- Must pass a background study
- Must be available to travel outside of your local MRC area
- Must complete required training

Training:

All volunteers that are chosen will be required to attend an orientation training and to attend trainings that are specifically related to the skills necessary to be a part of this unit. These trainings will be offered on a regular basis and will be a requirement to maintain status as a MBHMRC volunteer. Some training may be just-in-time training that can prepare volunteers when deployment occurs.

There will be a MBHMRC Orientation Training scheduled for later this year. Watch for details in an upcoming newsletter or in an email.

Unit Training Schedule

These are the trainings currently scheduled. You can attend any one of these trainings, regardless of location! *Registration is required for all trainings* and some locations have size restrictions so call the individual listed for more details or to register.

MN Responds MRC Orientations

08/25/2011 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. St. Luke's Catholic Church, 122 Commercial Avenue N., Sandstone, MN 55072. To register: pauline.amundson@co.pine.mn.us (320) 216-4213

EXERCISE Operation Thunder

06/28/2011 10:00 - 4:00 p.m. Zimmerman High School. Questions, contact tony.buttacavoli@co.isanti.mn.us or 763-689-8284

After a training, whether in person or online, update your training profile on www.mnresponds.org and send a copy of the certificate to your local MRC coordinator!

Partner Training Schedule SAVE THE DATE

Are You Ready? Conference (Central and West Central Regions)

“An Emergency Preparedness Conference for Healthcare System Partners”

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

August 18, 2011

Alexandria, MN

<http://www.togpartners.com/epc/>

Now accepting
Questions, Comments, and Suggestions
for future newsletters!

Please email tony.buttacavoli@co.isanti.mn.us and write “MN Responds MRC Newsletter” in the subject line.

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Management. This specific request was not from a local official, rather the Red Cross organization at which time we couldn't deploy as a unit but only pass along the information to volunteers as individuals.

Flooding: The Non-Event

As happy as Emergency Managers, Public Health, and all the communities are that the rivers and lakes stayed below flood stage, we feel responsible to our volunteers. We hosted Flood Response trainings, sent Incident Updates, and two counties activated and rostered volunteers. The Volunteers did respond; 15 attended a Flood Response class in Brainerd and 8 were rostered in Benton and Stearns County for First Aid stations at sandbagging sites (one volunteer worked one four-hour shift). Thank you for your response and participation!

What's Next?

The severe weather the United States is experiencing is cause for concern. We have to look at, and learn from, the tornado response in North Minneapolis and the floods, tornadoes, and wildfires occurring in the southern United States. Check in on your neighbors, review your personal and family communication plan and check your go kits. Update your contact information on www.mnresponds.org.

Hope for the best, plan for the worst.



Volunteers, Brainerd, Flood Response class, 04/07/2011