

Medical Reserve Corps Newsletter

March Health Madness Tests Preparedness

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment designated March 23-27 as March Health Madness, a week of exercises that culminated with the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department's mass dispensing exercise.

The scenario for the exercise was an outbreak of Hepatitis A after a food service worker became ill. Approximately 5,000 people could have been exposed. So, health department staff along with eight MRC volunteers, tested how quickly and efficiently they could dispense vaccines to a large number of people.

Michael Fox, new MRC volunteer, did not have to wait long after joining the unit to find out first-hand the role of an MRC volunteer during a public health emergency. (continued on page 2)



Above: (From left) Kim Swartz, Melissa McCormick and Tammy Frank meet with their team leader, Roxie Dohogne of the Health Department, before Friday's mass dispensing clinic opened.

Core Competency # 6

“Describe the impact of an event on the mental health of the MRC member, responders and others.”

A disaster, whether large or small, can produce significant psychological consequences not only for the individuals in its path, but for the general community where it strikes and the disaster relief personnel who come to their aid. Responding to the mental health consequences of disaster requires a thoughtful and planned approach.

Douglas County MRC has offered Psychological First Aid Training in the past with the assistance of Bert Nash and the Kansas All Hazards Behavioral Health Team. If you missed out on one of those opportunities, you can find multiple online trainings by accessing www.mrc.train.org and completing a course search by competency. If you would prefer to participate in a classroom setting, we can offer the training again in the fall.



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Upcoming Events

- **MRC Quarterly Meeting, April 22, 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department. Snacks will be provided.**
- **Emergency Response Forum with a panel of response agencies to discuss planning considerations for vulnerable populations. May 13, 2009, 11:30 a.m.—1 p.m. Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department Meeting Rooms ABC.**
- **We would like to remind all MRC Volunteers to register with K-SERV as it will eventually be our main database for managing our MRC Volunteers.**

February Training Illustrates the Do's and Don'ts of Sheltering Animals in a Disaster

On Feb. 9, Midge Grinstead of the Lawrence Humane Society and Debra Duncan of the Kansas Animal Health Department presented lessons learned from responding to large-scale disasters. MRC members from Douglas County and Shawnee County as well as Douglas County CERT volunteers learned what went wrong with animal response after the Greensburg tornado.

Grinstead responded to Louisiana

for a week after Hurricane Katrina, as well as to Greensburg after a tornado devastated the town, to



help shelter and care for animals affected by the storm.

The Greensburg tornado displaced about 350 animals and many became sick and died. She recalled children playing with stressed animals and recovered animals being given away to other people.

Lawrence is one of only a few communities in Kansas prepared to help animals during a large-scale disaster.

"We're the only shelter in the state that actually deploys to emergencies," Grinstead said.

MRC to Re-Organize

As many of you are aware, Douglas County MRC is again going through a change... **Kellie Worley** who has been the MRC Planner since August of 2007, decided to cut back her time, focus only on CHIP responsibilities and to be able to be home with her children a little more.

Kim Ens, Disease Control Program Coordinator, is taking over the Coordinator Position, with assistance from **Laura Poskochil**, L-DCHD AmeriCorps VISTA member. Kim has been the supervisor for MRC since it's inception in 2003, and has

been very involved in the unit's development. Kim is looking forward to getting to know the MRC volunteers better and wants to strengthen the unit. Please take the time to fill out the survey and let us know how you want to make your unit better!

To return the paper survey, mail to: Douglas County MRC, Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, 200 Maine St. Lawrence, KS 66044 or by fax to: 785-843-3161 Attention: MRC. It is important we hear from all of you!

Attention!

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Please take the time to fill out the enclosed brief survey or [check your e-mail for a link to an online version.](#)

Your participation will help us update our files and ensure everyone receives appropriate information and notifications.

If we haven't heard from you in the past year and you do not respond to the survey we will assume you are no longer interested in volunteering.

MRC Update

Welcome new members **Michael Fox** and **Michael Sanders** who attended the March 20 new MRC Volunteer Orientation. We are excited to have you in our unit!

A big thanks to the MRC volunteers who helped with the mass dispensing exercise on March 27:

Aynsley Anderson, Byron Edmondson, Michael Fox, Tammy Frank, Paula Hatcher (our Clinic Division Supervisor), **Rhetta Jo Noever, Melissa McCormick, and Kim Swartz.**

March Health Madness Continued

"The mass dispensing clinic at Free State High School gave us all a lot to think about. While it was reassuring to know that our community can pull together this capacity that will have its desired effect of protecting us from an outbreak, I think that every participant also realized that many things could be done better. So it made for a good learning experience for all of us," Fox said.



Above: Byron Edmondson, right, reviews his job description as Special Needs Team Leader with Kim Ens, center, and Heather Anderson, left, of the Health Department.