

# Medical Reserve Corps Newsletter

## MRC Volunteer Attends Pandemic Preparedness Training

The last week of May I had opportunity to attend a training course in "Pandemic Influenza Planning and Preparedness" put on at the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, AL.

The timing of this was interesting considering the current situation involving the H1N1 virus which has been in the news lately. One thing I learned was that pandemic flu generally spreads in waves and that the second wave was usually the most deadly. This H1N1 virus could mutate to become more deadly and infectious and a second wave hit just in time for this coming fall flu season.

Regardless of what happens with H1N1, it is premised that we will

have another deadly pandemic sometime and we need to be prepared. The training included a realistic table top exercise in which participants were assigned to emergency operations centers at various levels of government and tasked to deal with a pandemic flu situation as it took hold and then grew at an alarmingly increasing rate. (I was the State VOAD [Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters] Liaison in the exercise.) This course was eye-opening and thought provoking and I would encourage others to participate in this training and other exercises and training as opportunity arises.

-Byron Edmondson, Douglas County MRC Volunteer

## AmeriCorps Volunteer Wraps Up Year of Service

Laura Poskochil, AmeriCorps VISTA has been volunteering at the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department for the last year and is finishing up her year of service.

During her time here she has worked closely with two other VISTAs at Roger Hill Volunteer Center and Douglas County Emergency Management on emergency preparedness projects in Douglas County. Laura's main focus was working with the coalition Together Prepared on emergency preparedness issues facing vulnerable populations and helping

with various duties associated with MRC.

"It's hard to believe this year is almost over," Laura said. "I've learned so much about public health and emergency preparedness during my time volunteering here. I even find myself preaching hand washing to friends and family."

This fall, Laura will be attending the University of Texas at Austin for her Master's in Social Work and Erin Graham, a new VISTA will be taking her place for the following year.

Look for an introduction to Erin in our next quarterly newsletter!



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### Upcoming Events

- **MRC Quarterly Meeting**, August 3, 5:30 - 7 p.m. at the Community Health Facility, 1st Floor Meeting Room. Snacks will be provided.
- **Psychological First Aid Training**, September 9 & 15, 3:30 pm—7:00 pm at the Community Health Facility Meeting Room C.
- Consider taking **CERT training** this fall. Training dates TBA. See enclosed pamphlet for more info.

### Call for Volunteers:

Contact Kim Ens if interested.

- **Kickin' It With WIC**, September 17, 3:00 pm—6:00 pm. Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department. Promotion of physical activity for WIC families.
- **2009 Annual Preparedness Fair**, September 26, 9:00 am—12:00 pm at the Douglas County Fair Grounds, Building 21.

## H1N1 Situation Report for MRC Volunteers

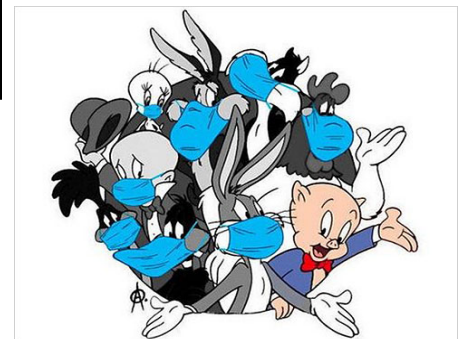
- We are still monitoring the pandemic influenza A (H1N1) virus.
- So far, most people who have been ill with this virus have recovered.
- In the United States as of June 26, 2009, 27,717 confirmed and probable infections with pandemic influenza A (H1N1) virus have been identified by CDC and state and local public health departments with 127 deaths. As of June 30, 2009, 129 confirmed cases have been reported in Kansas, 4 in Douglas County.
- During the week of June 14 – 20, 2009, surveillance shows that there are still higher levels of influenza-like illness than is normal for this time of year, and pandemic H1N1 outbreaks are ongoing in parts of the United States, in some cases with intense activity.
- CDC reports that localized outbreaks will continue to occur over the summer and that we will see pandemic H1N1 virus, illness and death during the upcoming United States flu season in the fall and winter.
- The real uncertainty is how widespread and severe the pandemic H1N1 virus will be during the 2009 – 2010 influenza season in the United States.
- Stay informed. I will provide additional information as it becomes available. Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
- Please help us be an ambassador to spread the news about ways for people to lessen the spread of this new virus:
  - ⇒ Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue and properly dispose of used tissues
  - ⇒ Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to get rid of most germs and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- ⇒ Try to avoid close contact with sick people
- ⇒ Stay home when you are sick to avoid spreading illness to co-workers and friends
- ⇒ Stay healthy by eating a balanced diet, drinking plenty of water and getting adequate rest and exercise.
- Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) has asked local health departments to start planning for possible mass dispensing of vaccination for H1N1 flu this fall. We will need MRC volunteers to help us vaccinate the community.
- We will be discussing this at the quarterly meeting on **Monday, August 3, 2009**. The meeting will be in the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Meeting Room. We will update the H1N1 flu situation as we know it then.

## Core Competency # 7

***“Demonstrate the MRC member’s ability to follow procedures for assignment, activation, reporting, and deactivation.”***

MRC volunteers will be notified by phone or electronically to request their assistance during a public health emergency. Volunteers will follow these procedures:

1. Report to the assigned reporting area designated by the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department with a photo ID.
2. At the reporting area, volunteers will sign in and receive their emergency identification badge and assignment.
3. Volunteers will receive situational *Just in Time Training*.
4. Volunteers should report to their assignment and check in with their Supervisor who will instruct the volunteer on what job they will perform.
5. At the end of a shift volunteers must brief their replacement staff on all pertinent information needed to perform the job and continue smooth clinic operation.
6. At the end of the shift the volunteer will report back to the reporting area to sign out and return the emergency identification badge. Mental health services will be available to all outgoing volunteers if needed.



## MRC Update

Welcome new members **Vera Cole**, **Eileen Fitch** and **Rosalie McMaster** who attended new MRC Volunteer Orientation in June. We are excited to have you in our unit!

Thanks to those who volunteered their time at this year’s Iron Man Competition. Your contribution was appreciated by many!