

Medical Reserve Corps Newsletter

September is National Preparedness Month

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's *Ready Campaign* (www.ready.gov) is sponsoring the fifth annual National Preparedness Month in September. "National Preparedness Month is an important reminder about each American's civic responsibility to prepare for emergencies," said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. "Those with the capacity and wherewithal to help themselves must do so in advance, so that in the event of an emergency, responders can first assist those who are unable to tend to themselves. In order to educate Douglas County Citizens about becoming better prepared and the resources available to them, the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, Roger Hill Volunteer Center and Douglas County Emergency Management are holding a Preparedness Fair on September 27, from 10am-Noon at South Jr. High School. MRC will have a booth about preparedness and will also conduct hand-washing demonstrations at the fair.



Core Competency #4



Describe the local MRC unit's role in public health and/or emergency response and its application to a given incident.

In the event of an emergency, MRC volunteers will provide support to the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department including mass vaccination or pharmaceutical distribution clinics, disease outbreak investigations, or other emergencies involving public health as appropriate. One training for Core Competency # 4 has already been provided by participating in a mass dispensing exercise. If you missed that opportunity, there is an online class available that describes working at a Point of Dispensing (POD) available on MRC TRAIN, www.mrc.train.org, course code number 1010263. It is important to have an understanding of what a POD is, how it operates, and what functional roles you may be assigned as a volunteer serving in a POD.



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Upcoming Events

- **WIC Activity Day, September 18 from 3pm-6pm. Volunteers needed!**
- **Free Dental Day; September 19, all day. Volunteers needed!**
- **LMH Health Fair; September 20, 7:30 am-10:30 am. Volunteers needed!**
- **Emergency Call-down exercise; week of September 22-27. Be prepared!**
- **Douglas County Preparedness Fair; Saturday, September 27 from 10am-Noon.**
- **Prairie Park Family Fun Walk; Saturday, October 4, 9am-11am. Volunteers needed!**
- **ICS 100 Training; Monday, October 20, 5:30 pm. ICS is required of MRC volunteers! Also available through FEMA website.**
- **SAVE THE DATE! MRC Volunteer Reception; October 30, 6:30pm.**

Americorps VISTA Members Join Preparedness Efforts

This summer, three Americorps VISTA members were chosen to begin an Emergency Preparedness Project. The sponsoring organizations are the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, Roger Hill Volunteer Center and Douglas County Emergency Management. Although the three VISTA members are part of a team working on a large project, each is housed by a different sponsoring organizations and each have slightly different goals. Anna Forester, who is working in the Roger Hill Volunteer Center will focus primarily on helping develop Continuity of Operations Plans (COOPs) for local non-profit businesses and organizations as well as planning a volunteer reception center exercise. Brittany Price is working in the Douglas County Emergency Management office and will be primarily concerned with public education in regards to emergency preparedness. She will provide outreach materials and samples of emergency and communication plans for members of the public. The Health Department houses Laura Poskochil, who will be primarily working with the group Together Prepared in order to help better prepare the vulnerable populations in Douglas County. She will also be working with MRC to help find new training activities and funding. The team members are also primarily responsible for planning and hosting the September 27th Preparedness Fair and are excited to continue with this exciting new project.



From left to right: Laura, Anna, Brittany.

Facing the Threats: Training Opportunities for MRC Volunteers—by Cathy Rooney, MRC Volunteer

Medical Reserve Core (MRC) volunteers are among the diverse responder disciplines that are to be ready for the challenges of disasters and public health threats. To assist responders in facing these challenges, the most up-to-date training courses are being offered by U.S. Department of Homeland Security. As a MRC volunteer, I took the intense three-day Pandemic Influenza Planning and Preparedness course, known as PIPP, at FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, Alabama. The Center staff makes it easy to attend. They not only cover all the cost, but make all the arrangements. PIPP is described as "a 24-hour course providing an overview of pandemic influenza, its challenges, and many

facets of community planning. It culminates in an all-day exercise that casts the responder in a planning capacity to prepare a fictitious community (modeled after Leavenworth, Kansas) for pandemic influenza from the beginning of an outbreak and as it unfolds in a community." Public health threats are complex and require all responder fields to come together under unknown circumstances. For example, in a pandemic influenza even a 24 hour delay in action may result in either a 75% or 50% survival rate in a community. During our classroom and exercise scenario personnel from public health, hospital administrators, health care personnel, law enforcement, fire, EMS, animal care, public works, governmental admin-

istrators, and the business sector played their parts in determining what precautions and portions of the plan to execute. It was intense at times. Responders from across the US and US territories have taken courses at this Center, which boasts of having the only hospital facility dedicated to training hospital and health personal in preparedness and response. Plus, it has the only civilian training exercise in a truly toxic environment using chemical agents for advance hands on preparation. To learn more about the various courses see: <https://cdp.dhs.gov/index.html> (look under resident training).

MRC Update



- **Scott Risley** gave a handwashing demonstration to C-TRAN for Lawrence Public Schools. Thank you for your time, Scott!
- **Jennifer McGoldrick, Steve McGoldrick, Byron Edmondson, and Ken Phipps** attended the two-part Psychological First Aid training held in August. Congratulations to those of you who

completed the training and thank you for participating!

- **Sara Weber** assisted the Health Department with the Love and Logic class by reading and playing games with the children of class participants. Thank you, Sara!

* **Due to time and budget restraints, the MRC Newsletter will become quarterly, effective immediately. The next newsletter will be sent out in January, 2009. Thank you.**

