



Albany County Medical Reserve Corps VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

DANIEL P. McCOY
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

ELIZABETH F. WHALEN, MD, MPH
COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH



The Albany County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Volunteer Newsletter is designed to keep our volunteers informed about Albany County's emergency preparedness efforts, volunteer training opportunities and pertinent emergency preparedness news.

MRC Volunteers Support Point-of-Dispensing (POD) Exercise

On June 2, 2016, the Albany County Department of Health (ACDOH) held a point-of-dispensing (POD) full-scale exercise to test its ability to dispense medications quickly during a large-scale emergency. Similar to previous exercises, the practice scenario was a fictitious widespread anthrax attack that may have exposed hundreds of citizens to the toxic bacteria, necessitating the rapid distribution of medical countermeasures to prevent illness.

The exercise was conducted at Guilderland High School and a total of 24 Albany County MRC volunteers participated. Volunteers were a critical part of every aspect of the POD operation and assigned volunteer roles included: Griage, Pre-Registration, Flow, Medical Evaluation, Safety Officer, Pharmacy,

Health Education, Dispensing, and POD Recipient. In addition, volunteers assigned to work in Dispensing also completed a pre-event training on May 31, 2016 for the Countermeasure Data Management System (CDMS) used at the POD exercise.

A unique feature of this exercise was that all POD operations staff were asked to go through the POD before it opened to the public. This action served two purposes: 1) It allowed Dispensing staff an additional round of practice on CDMS; and 2) Demonstrated what would occur during a true emergency, in which first responders and POD staff would receive their medical countermeasures prior to the opening of a POD. Exercises provide the ACDOH the opportunity to test emergency response plans, familiarize staff and volunteers with processes, allow different agencies to work together, and identify any gaps or limitations in emergency planning and operations. For these reasons, the "hotwash" (also known as debriefing) session immediately following the POD exercise generated indispensable feedback about what worked well and what aspects of planning and operations need improvement.

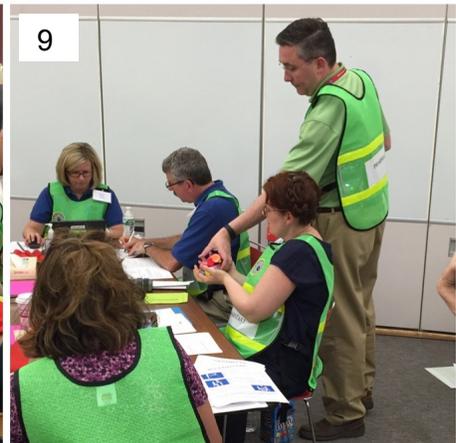
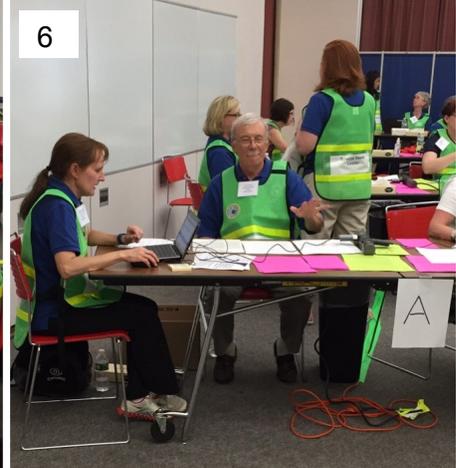
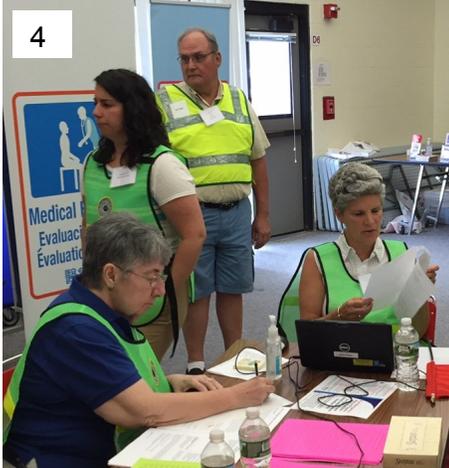
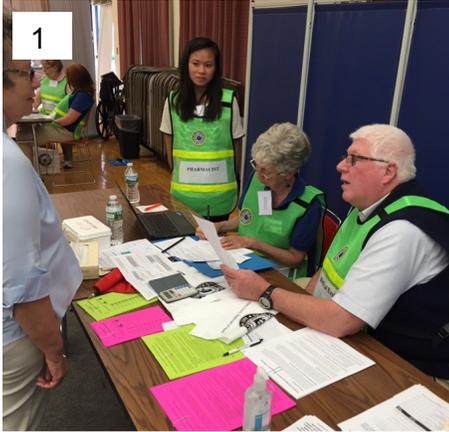
Thank you to all Albany County MRC volunteers who were available to participate in this exercise!

Turn to Page 2 for more POD photos!



POD Exercise on June 2, 2016 at Guilderland High School.

POD Highlight Reel Starring Albany County MRC Volunteers!



MRC volunteers pictured:

1. Patrick Broderick (*right*), Medical Evaluation.
2. Cindy Carlstead (*middle*), Dispensing.
3. Susan Kukuk and Russ Altone, Dispensing.
4. Alice Esmond and Jolene Dirolf, Dispensing; Jim Link (*standing*), Flow.
5. Rose Duncan-Cleary and Valerie Flanders, Dispensing.
6. Michelle Sanchez and David Esmond, Dispensing.
7. Desiree Arthurton and Richard Gutheil, Griage.
8. Denise Garrah and Jack Guzewich, Dispensing.

MRC volunteers not pictured:

- Mary Applegate, Health Education.
- Judi Eells, Safety Officer.
- Diane Link, Recipient.
- Clare McAssey, Recipient Coordinator.
- Lori McCormick, Dispensing.
- Cathy Stone, Dispensing.
- Julie Thompson, Pre-Registration.

Celebrating Service: Our 2016 Volunteer Recognition Dinner

Every two years during National Volunteer Week, the Albany County MRC holds a Volunteer Recognition Dinner to honor our most active volunteers. This year we were fortunate to host the event on April 12, 2016, at the Latham Fire House, with opening remarks provided by Albany County Executive Daniel P. McCoy's office and Dr. Elizabeth Whalen, Commissioner of Health.

A new activity was conducted at the dinner this time; in lieu of a guest speaker, volunteers participated in a Volunteer Feedback Workshop. Volunteers formed 5 teams, each tasked with providing constructive feedback on topics related to volunteer management, including: Activation & Deployment; Training; Recruitment & Retention; ServNY; and Notification. Key points from the group discussion during this workshop will be utilized in future Albany County MRC strategic planning.

Thank you to all Albany County MRC volunteers for your continued participation and service!



Photos from the Volunteer Recognition Dinner on April 12, 2016.

Test Your Public Health Knowledge

As an "ice-breaker" before the Volunteer Feedback Workshop (*see above*), volunteers played a Public Health Group Trivia contest. It was a close game, but in the end Team #5 edged out the competition to win some fabulous prizes—tiny bottles of hand sanitizer! Below are the questions used in the trivia game (*answers are on page 4*):

1. Which is the most common type of natural disaster in the United States? _____
2. The study of the distribution of disease and other health-related conditions in the human populations is called _____.
3. In what year was the Albany County MRC officially formed by receiving national designation? _____
4. On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization declared that the H1N1 virus aka "swine flu" was a _____.
5. What does the acronym ICS stand for? _____
6. The actress Kate Winslet starred in this movie about an infectious disease outbreak that started in Hong Kong and rapidly spread across the globe: _____
7. Which of the following bioterrorism agents is NOT classified as "Category A" by the Centers for Disease Control? *Anthrax, smallpox, Ebola virus, or Zika virus. (select one)*
8. What do we call the term for an approach to reduce stress and assist in healthy recovery following a traumatic event, natural disaster, or public health emergency? _____
9. Which infectious disease has been eradicated worldwide? *Polio, Smallpox, Plague, or Malaria. (select one)*
10. When you receive an ACCESS phone notification drill, what number should show up on your caller ID?

MRC In-Action Across the Nation

Sharing a story from one of our fellow MRC units:

Protecting health behind the scenes during the Papal Visit to Philadelphia

November 3, 2015:

When the Pope came to Philadelphia earlier this year, I got to be part of the action. But I wasn't a spectator and I didn't go to mass. Instead, I got to be a part of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) response. MRC staff and volunteers from throughout the Pennsylvania and neighboring states came together to make sure that people could get urgent medical care if something happened while people were gathered to see the Pope.

The crowds were huge. Hundreds of thousands of people gathered in the city of brotherly love to welcome the Pope. When you have that many people in one place, there needs to be a plan to help people who need urgent medical care. What if someone has a heart attack? Or goes into labor? What if a bomb goes off? Thankfully, there were no bombs or other serious threats. But MRC volunteers did help handle the needs for urgent care that arose and stood by ready to help in case of an emergency.

Being ready to help other communities starts with a plan and some great partnerships. MRC planners worked for a year to get ready for this event. The planners knew that they would need a lot of volunteers - more than they could get locally. So they reached out to other MRC units throughout the state. A total of 176 MRC volunteers stepped forward to help - at least one volunteer from every MRC unit in Pennsylvania was part of this response.

Even though volunteers came from all over the state and most of them had never met each other before, they came together as a team. Just to get into the city, some people traveled on an eight hour bus ride and met an additional one hour delay when they got into town. They then worked 12 hour shifts and bunked at a local community college. And despite all that hard work, travel and delays, MRC volunteers told me that they were excited. They wanted to serve and they pretty psyched to be part of something bigger. Over the course of the Pope's visit to Philadelphia, MRC volunteers saw 166 patients. The time that they dedicated helped keep those people healthy and gave their families peace of mind. MRC units also served during Pope's visit to New York and Washington, DC. Medical Reserve Corps volunteers come together to make a difference every day. Sometimes, they get people urgently needed medical attention at a major event like the Pope's visit or they come together to help respond to a disaster. Their contributions matter to their communities.

To view images from the 2015 Papal Visit, please visit the national [MRC Facebook Page](#).

By Grace M. Middleton, Communications Coordinator, MRC, Office of Emergency Management (OEM), HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response.

Source: ASPR Blog, November 3, 2015. Click link to access article in-full:

<http://www.phe.gov/ASPRBlog/pages/BlogArticlePage.aspx?PostID=162>



Public Health Trivia Answers:

(from page 3)

1. Floods
2. Epidemiology
3. 2007
4. Global pandemic
5. Incident Command System
6. Contagion
7. Zika virus
8. Psychological First Aid
9. Smallpox
10. (518) 765-2351

Questions or Comments? *Please contact:*

Maureen Casale-Reidy, MPH, Public Health Planner, MRC Coordinator
(518) 447-4610 maureen.casale-reidy@albanycountyny.gov



Albany County does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, gender, age, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, genetic information, veteran status or marital status in its programs and activities.