



Albany County Medical Reserve Corp Volunteer Newsletter

MICHAEL G. BRESLIN
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

JAMES B. CRUCETTI, MD, MPH
HEALTH COMMISSIONER

Volume 13

December 2008

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

Volunteer Activation Drill

On Wednesday, October 8, 2008 the Albany County Medical Reserve Corp worked with the staff of the Albany County Department of Health to hold a volunteer activation and just-in-time-training (JITT) drill. This drill was designed to test:

- our automated volunteer activation system,
- our ability to rapidly assign point of dispensing (POD) job assignments to volunteers;
- and our current POD JITT curriculum.



According to our call report, approximately ten volunteers committed to report to the drill through the automated call system. We used an email as our redundant communication to follow-up with volunteers who may have missed the call and another 15 additional volunteers committed to report to the drill. In the end, we were very pleased that nearly 40 volunteers reported for the drill. This experience outlines the need for our volunteers to answer and appropriately respond to these quarterly activation calls. In a true emergency, we must accurately estimate the number of volunteers who will be reporting.

Volunteers were rapidly assigned POD jobs based on their licensure, and current experience with vaccinations. Involvement of Department of Health staff allowed us to test our JITT curriculum on a number of levels. Department of Health staff provided JITT to four volunteer POD managers, who then provided JITT for eight staff working as station leaders, who then provided JITT for the more than 35 volunteers assigned to the various POD stations (i.e. registration, medical screening etc). It was a great collaborative effort and we greatly appreciate the participation of the volunteers who reported for the drill.



Inside this issue:

Volunteer Activation Drill	1
Flu POD Drills	2
Donate Life	2
Retired Senior Volunteer Program	3
Family Preparedness	3
2009 Trainings	3



For More Information:

Contact Jill Dunkel
(518) 447-4633

jill.dunkel@albanycounty.com

ACMRC

175 Green St.

Albany, NY 12202

www.albanycounty.com/health/mrc/



The Albany County Medical Reserve Corp wishes all of its members and their families a very safe and joyous holiday season.



Albany County Flu PODs

During the month of November, the Albany County Department of Health conducted three Point of Dispensing (POD) drills with local municipal partners. These drills were designed to test the POD location selected by the municipality and give staff and volunteers an opportunity to become more familiar with the POD process.



The POD drills were held in collaboration with the City of Albany, Town of Bethlehem & Bethlehem Central School District, and the Town of Coeymans and Village of Ravena. These POD drills provided free influenza vaccinations to more than 450 individuals. MRC volunteers helped staff these PODs and played an integral part in the success of these drills. Thank you to all members who volunteered to participate.

Albany County Community Flu Clinics!!

Each Fall, the Albany County Department of Health works with community groups to set up and staff more than 30 community flu clinics around the county. For the past three years, the Medical Reserve Corp has been asked to help staff these clinics and each year our members come forward to volunteer. This year 15 MRC volunteers helped staff community flu clinics in the County and we are very grateful for their participation. Eva Graziano, the Department of Health's Immunization Coordinator and her staff had very high praise for all who participated!! Thank you!

Donate Life. Become a Donor!

There are currently almost 100,000 patients waiting for a life-saving organ transplant in the United States. Hundreds of thousands of people will need a tissue transplant this year. You have the power to help save and enhance lives. New Yorkers can document their decision to become an organ and tissue donor by enrolling in the New York State Donate Life Registry.

In 2006, a new law created the Donate Life Registry: a registry that records an individual's own legal consent to organ, tissue and eye donation upon their death. If you are registered in this new registry, your family will be informed of your decision and given information regarding the donation process, but their permission is not required to proceed with donation. Signing the back of your drivers license only provides your intent, your family will have to give the ultimate consent.



The registry is a confidential database maintained by the New York State Department of Health that serves as a legal document of consent to donation. Joining the registry ensures that a person's decision to be an organ and/or tissue donor will be honored when possible. New Yorkers can enroll in the registry online at www.donatelifecapitalregion.com. For more information, call the Albany County Department of Health at (518) 447-4608.



Retired and Senior Volunteer Program

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) utilizes the talents and experience of people 55 years and older by matching them with interesting and important volunteer opportunities in their community. RSVP is a federally sponsored and funded program that has been in existence for almost 40 years. RSVP currently links more than 500,000 Americans to service opportunities. In the Capital District, over 600 active RSVP volunteers assist local non-profit agencies by contributing their skills, knowledge, and experience. The Albany County Medical Reserve Corp has a memorandum of understanding with RSVP to request volunteers in an emergency situation and we are very fortunate to have a number of RSVP volunteers who are also members of our MRC.

By enrolling in RSVP, you will automatically qualify for insurance coverage for your volunteer activities – at no charge to you! Limited travel expense reimbursement is also available, to help defray the costs of travel between your home and the place where you volunteer. You will receive a quarterly newsletter, which will keep you updated on volunteer activities, and celebrate the achievements and service of RSVP volunteers. Finally, by enrolling, you assist RSVP in keeping track of and reporting on all of the great things that retired people in this area are accomplishing through volunteering.

For more information, contact the RSVP office at RSVP@albany.edu or by phone at 518-442-5585.

“Wrap-up” Your Family Preparedness Plan

I am sure you have all read the many articles in this newsletter and elsewhere that document the importance of having a family/household preparedness plan. How many of you have actually followed through on creating a plan, assembling a go-kit, stock-piling essential supplies, and testing your plan? Why not make 2009 the year you accomplish this very important task? As a Medical Reserve Corp Volunteer, you are much more likely to volunteer in a disaster if you know that your family is safe. By creating this plan, it will help give you the peace of mind to come forward to help the community in an emergency. Preparing for emergencies and disasters does not have to occur all at once. Make a list of needed supplies for your go-kit or for sheltering in place and add one item to your shopping list each week. Before you know it, you will have all the supplies you need. If you need additional information on how to start this planning process, please contact Jill Dunkel at 447-4633 for a family preparedness planning kit.

2009 Trainings

We are in the process of putting together the 2009 winter training schedule. We will be repeating the Introduction to Point of Dispensing training for those who have not yet attended. We also hope to offer the very popular Weapons of Mass Destruction training for those who have missed it in the past. Many of you have asked about online training options, a list of approved trainings will be coming out in January 2009. We are also working with the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York to offer CPR and First Aid trainings. If you are an instructor for these courses, please contact Jill Dunkel at 447-4633. If you have any suggestions for future trainings, please do not hesitate to let Jill know.

Albany County Citizen Corps Council

The Albany County Department of Health is pleased to announce that it is the recipient of a New York State grant that will fund reactivating the Albany County Citizen Corp Council. The Council will consist of agencies, organizations, businesses, and other community stakeholders who are committed to working collaboratively to improve the preparedness of our citizens and our community. This task will be accomplished through education, training, community outreach, and resource mobilization. The Citizen Corps Council will also focus on creating a unified approach to dealing with spontaneous unaffiliated volunteers (SUVs) in an emergency. We are very grateful to have tremendous community support for this initiative including the support of the Albany County Sheriff's Department, Albany Medical Center, the American Red Cross and many other community partners. If you work or volunteer with an agency, organization or business who would like to get involved with the Albany County Citizen Corps Council, please contact Jill Dunkel at 447-4633 or jill.dunkel@albanycounty.com.

The Citizen Corps Council is a national program created after the events of September 11, 2001, According the Citizen Corps website "America witnessed a wellspring of selflessness and heroism. People in every corner of the country asked, "What can I do?" and "How can I help?" Citizen Corps was created to help all Americans answer these questions through public education and outreach, training, and volunteer service" (<http://www.citizencorps.gov/cc/index.do>).

Citizen Corps Councils help drive local citizen participation by coordinating Citizen Corps programs, developing community action plans, assessing possible threats and identifying local resources. Citizen Corp programs in Albany County include the Medical Reserve Corp, Fire Corp, and Neighborhood Watch.

The mission of Citizen Corps is to harness the power of every individual through education, training, and volunteer service to make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to the threats of terrorism, crime, public health issues, and disasters of all kinds. The Citizen Corps mission is accomplished through a [national network of state, local, and tribal Citizen Corps Councils](#). These Councils build on community strengths to implement the Citizen Corps programs and will carry out a local strategy to have every American participate.

Currently there are: **55** State/Territory Citizen Corps Councils and **2,340** County/Local/Tribal Citizen Corps Councils which serve **223,933,906** people or **78** % of the total US population.



Have a Happy New Year!!