



Albany County Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer Newsletter

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

SERVNY Database Goes Online

On Tuesday, March 3, 2009 the SERVNY database officially went online for our MRC volunteers. SERVNY is a new volunteer database managed by the New York State Department of Health and county volunteer coordinators. The new system allows volunteers to register online to help the county and/or state in an emergency situation. This new system has the ability to immediately verify the medical licenses of our clinical volunteers and collect information on clinicians' hospital privileges. In addition, it provides our volunteers with the opportunity to maintain control over their personal information and the ability to update their contact information as needed.

To make this system function effectively for the Albany County MRC, we need each volunteer to access the system and fully complete the registration process. Existing MRC volunteers (at the time of the launch) were emailed a PIN to assist them with the registration process. The PIN enables the system to retrieve your current file and pre-populate your contact information. This information needs to be checked for accuracy and additional required fields need to be completed. If you did not receive a PIN via email, **please contact Jill Dunkel immediately**. All volunteers who DO NOT update their record will be put on an inactive volunteer list. We will be going through the database over the next few months and following up with each volunteer who has not completed the process. With over 400 volunteers, this will take some time. The link to the new database is <http://www.nyhealth.gov/servny?prog=1>.



Inside this issue:

SERVNY Database	1
Upcoming Trainings	2
Upcoming Drill	2
Volunteer Recognition Dinner	3
Join us on Facebook	3
Role of FEMA	4



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THANK YOU

April 19 –25, 2009 is National Volunteer Recognition Week and the Albany County Medical Reserve Corps would like to thank all of our volunteers for committing to assist the county in a public health emergency and for their participation in MRC events and trainings.

Upcoming Trainings

New Member Orientation and Introduction to Point of Dispensing (POD)

Thursday, May 7, 2009 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the Albany County Department of Health (ACDOH). Dinner will be provided. This training will provide members with a brief orientation to the MRC, an overview of pandemic influenza, an introduction to the incident command system, and details on the county's POD plan and the roles we will ask volunteers to fill in an emergency. Please contact Jill Dunkel at 447-4633 or jill.dunkel@albanycounty.com to register. *This training is for MRC volunteers who have not yet attended a Point of Dispensing (POD) training.*

Radiological Preparedness and Response

Monday, May 18, 2009 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the ACDOH.

MRC Volunteers will receive an overview of radiological agents and gain an understanding of how a response to a radiological event will occur. Dinner will be provided. The speaker will be Dr. Larry Flesh, Chief Medical Director of the Veteran Administration (VA)

Healthcare Network Upstate New York and the Chief of the VA's Medical Radiological Response Team. Dr. Flesh is a world renowned

speaker who has been involved in Radiation Accident Preparedness since 1981. Please contact Jill Dunkel at 447-4633 or jill.dunkel@albanycounty.com to register.



Advanced Point of Dispensing Training

June date and location to be announced shortly.

This training will provide MRC members with hands-on experience working at a Point of Dispensing location, an overview of how POD jobs are assigned, and a clearer understanding of the POD stations and their functions. Volunteers who have attended the introduction to POD training will be given a priority at registration.

Upcoming DRILL

Empire 2009 Exercise

On June 1-5, 2009 the Albany County Department of Health, in conjunction with the Albany County Executive's Office; Albany County Sheriff's Department; City of Albany; Rensselaer County; New York State Department of Health; New York State Emergency Management Office; and various federal partners will be participating in a federal radiological exercise sponsored by the United States Department of Energy. The purpose of the exercise is to demonstrate capability to respond to a domestic radiological dispersal device in an urban environment. The Albany County Department of Health will be looking for volunteers to participate in this exercise. More details will be forthcoming.

Volunteer Recognition Dinner

The Albany County Medical Reserve Corps is hosting its first Volunteer Recognition Event to recognize volunteers who have attended MRC trainings and/or drills over the last three years. We are so grateful for all of our volunteers and your participation at any level. Whether you regularly attend trainings or drills or if you only want to help in a true emergency, you are very important to us and we thank you for being a member. Attendance at this event is by invitation only and we hope to have the resources in the future to be able to invite our entire membership.

Become a Fan: Join Us on Facebook

The Albany County Medical Reserve Corps now has a page on Facebook (FB)! Become a fan and promote the MRC to all your friends on FB. Simply type our name (Albany County Medical Reserve Corps) into the search box, when our page pops up, click on become a fan. It is another great way to keep up with what is going on with the MRC and help us recruit new members.

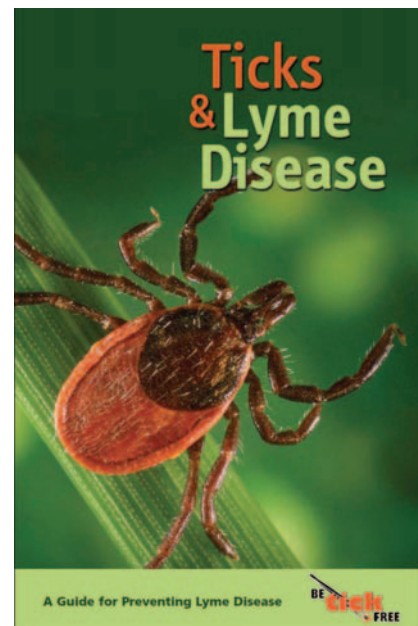
Does your Emergency Preparedness Kit contain recalled or expired items?

FEMA encourages all citizens to check their Emergency Preparedness Kit for expired food or items included in the peanut butter recall. A complete list of recalled items is available online at <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/peanutbutterrecall/index.cfm>.

Free Resource on Lyme Disease

The Albany County Department of Health has free Lyme Disease brochures available. If you work in a doctor's office, hospital, business, faith-based establishment or any location where you interact with the public, this is a great free resource to make available to your clientele. If you would just like a copy for yourself, friends and family feel free to request one or more copies.

Please contact Suzanne Swan at 447-4648 or by email at Suzanne.Swan@albanycounty.com to request copies of this free resource.



FEMA is Not A First Responder

CQ HOMELAND SECURITY March 9, 2009

By Daniel Fowler, CQ Staff

The public perception of the Federal Emergency Management Agency needs to change, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano told emergency management officials Monday. FEMA, she said, is not the first responder. That role belongs to local government.

"When something happens, be it a tornado, be it an ice storm, be it whatever, even if it's . . . a disaster like a terrorist attack . . . it will be our local individuals who are the first responders," Napolitano told attendees at the National Emergency Management Association's mid-year conference in Alexandria, Va. "It will be police and fire and your local 911 exchange and your local emergency management agency." The common perception, however, is that in an emergency FEMA is supposed to be there first, and if it's not, then "something's wrong" with the agency, she said. "I think that's an expectation that probably developed in the wake of [hurricanes Katrina and Rita] and all of the problems there, when the notion of FEMA being a first responder . . . really became dominant in the media," Napolitano said. But, she continued, "I think all of us have a role to play in changing that perception in the public and in the media."

Should locals be unable to handle an emergency, then the state comes in to provide assistance, and after that, FEMA enters the scene, Napolitano said. "It's really after that level that FEMA comes in as support, as backup and to deal with the larger issues, where resources may be impacted and also to provide whatever after-the-event planning needs to occur," said Napolitano. She noted that FEMA does cooperative management and planning before events.

Even when FEMA is doing what it should be doing, Napolitano suggested there are perception problems. For example, during the recent Kentucky ice storm, "a mayor of a small town in west Kentucky complained to the press that they were going through all of this stuff, and he'd never seen anybody from FEMA, so FEMA wasn't there, nobody from FEMA had contacted him," Napolitano said. But in fact, FEMA was engaged in the response and had been providing resources and meals to the residents. When Kentucky Gov. Steven L. Beshear called the mayor and asked if generators and meals were being delivered and his community had an open shelter, the mayor responded affirmatively, Napolitano said. "The governor said, 'Well, FEMA was helpful in getting all that done, it's just that they didn't have a bunch of FEMA people walking around with FEMA on their jackets,'" Napolitano said. "It's that kind of re-education I think that would be very helpful."

During questions afterward, the secretary said, "whenever anything goes awry or a little bit off in anything," it's perceived as being FEMA's fault, but that's not true. "And we don't need to describe it as such," Napolitano said. "I think you all can help with that, and messaging about the proper role of local state and FEMA where an emergency is concerned, and clearing up what others might be saying or presuming in that arena."