



Albany County Medical Reserve Corp Volunteer Newsletter

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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.

Congratulations MRC Volunteers

On Wednesday, April 30, 2008 the members of the Albany County Medical Reserve Corp were honored by Albany County Executive Michael Breslin at the 2008 Volunteer Award ceremony. Each year, the County Executive honors dedicated volunteers who regularly donate their time, energy and expertise and have made a difference in the community.



The County Executive's Volunteer Awards ceremony is an opportunity to honor our dedicated volunteers and share with others the great satisfaction that comes with volunteering one's time and efforts to a worthy cause. Albany County encourages people of all ages to work together to build caring and responsive communities in which service and volunteerism are a way of life.

Desiree Arthurton (left) and Karen Chonou (right) accepted the award on behalf of the MRC members.



Inside this issue:

Volunteer Award	1
Trainings and Conferences	2
Pandemic News	2



For More Information:

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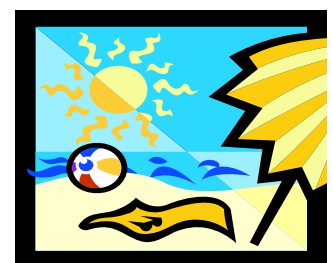
<http://www.albanycounty.com/health/mrc/>

LOOKING FOR A SUMMER PROJECT?

How about creating a family/household preparedness plan and go kit. The Albany County Medical Reserve Corp has a Family Handbook you can use to create your own personal plan. Take the time to prepare now so you won't be caught off-guard later. Call or email Jill for your Family Handbook and go-kit inventory list.



REMINDER: The next Volunteer Notification Drill will occur during the month of June. Please answer the CALL!





Training and Conferences

New York State Community Preparedness Volunteer Conference

June 12-13, 2008 at the Holiday Inn on Wolf Rd.

This conference is hosted by the American Red Cross and the New York State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) to provide volunteers with an overview of how volunteers can support emergency first responders and how emergency management partners with volunteers in a crisis. Two Albany County MRC volunteers have been offered the opportunity to attend this exciting conference. Additional slots may be made available if space allows. If you are interested in attending, please contact Jill at 447-4633.

Psychological First Aid for the Non-mental Health Provider Train the Trainer

The Albany County MRC and the Albany County Department of Health will be hosting a train the trainer on Psychological First Aid (PFA) for the non-mental health provider on Wednesday, July 16, 2008. This full day training (9 am-4 pm) is designed to familiarize participants with the New York State Psychological First Aid (PFA) instructor-led course so that participants may instruct others in their communities. MRC members interested in attending this course must be willing to provide future trainings on PFA to other MRC volunteers and/or community groups.

Personal MRC Training Record

Over the next few months, each MRC member will be receiving a personal MRC training record. The Albany County MRC does not require volunteers to attend any trainings, however we strongly encourage each MRC member to meet the Core Competencies for MRC volunteers. This can be accomplished through attending in-person trainings or completing courses online. We value your membership and participation, at whatever level you feel comfortable.

News

REUTERS NEWS: Risk of pandemic likely growing.

May 6, 2008

According to a recent Reuters News article, the risk of a human influenza pandemic remains real and is probably growing as the bird flu virus becomes entrenched in poultry in more countries. World health experts attending a meeting hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO) were updated on the organization's guidance to countries on how to boost their defenses against a deadly global epidemic. The H5N1 avian flu virus has infected flocks in much of Asia, Africa and parts of Europe. Experts fear it could mutate into a form that passes easily from person to person, sparking an influenza pandemic that could kill millions.

"We are concerned that the spread through migratory birds hasn't stopped. Once the virus is established in birds, it is difficult to get rid of the virus and the risk (to humans) remains unless countries develop good control of transmission in birds," Dr. Supamit Chunsuttiwat, a disease control expert at Thailand's health ministry told Reuters.

The WHO said they are "going to improve our guidance and give people and countries better tools to deal with," said Keiji Fukuda, coordinator of WHO's global influenza program. "Pandemic preparedness is not just a health sector effort, it is something that requires the whole of society's perspective." The WHO uses six phases of pandemic alert to gauge levels of threat. The world is currently in phase 3, meaning that a new influenza virus subtype is causing disease in humans but is not yet spreading efficiently. "The risk is as great as it has ever been. We hope to send out a very clear message that this effort needs to continue and the threat has not gone away," Fukuda told Reuters.

To read the complete article, go to <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/24484755/from/ET/>