

VIPR Update

Mississippi State Department of Health

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Welcome!

Welcome to the premier edition of the **Volunteers in Preparedness Registry (VIPR)** news update! VIPR (pronounced “vi-per”) is a preparedness program sponsored by the Mississippi State Department of Health, Office of Emergency Planning and Response (OEPR). It is a secure database of pre-credentialed health care volunteers and pre-registered non-medical volunteers who are trained to provide a coordinated response to emergencies in support of our established public health and emergency response systems. *The VIPR Update* is designed to educate and communicate valuable information, news and training opportunities to existing and potential disaster volunteers.

Recent disasters have shown that emergencies need management by local people. In the event of a large-scale public health emergency, health and medical systems would be overwhelmed with individuals seeking treatment. The need to meet this demand would be critical. Volunteers may be the only viable resource available in an emergency. OEPR wants to prepare our communities to become ready **now!**

We are continually recruiting volunteers, 18 years of age and older, who would like to make a difference in their community while responding to a crisis, and we have a great need for volunteers from our local communities across the state. .

- Over 80% of the volunteer roles are non-medical, such as greeters, translators, runners, floaters, data entry, clergy, administrators, ham operators, bus drivers, communications specialist, inventory control and IT personnel.
- If you work in healthcare, we need your professional expertise to form a medical network that will allow us to respond effectively to all hazards disasters. We are seeking physicians, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, veterinarians, social workers, mental health professionals, emergency medical technicians, and other allied healthcare professionals.

Benefits of Volunteering

In the wake of a catastrophic event, local communities must be prepared to dispense needed drugs and medical supplies to 100% of their population. There are many benefits of being a registered public health emergency volunteer. Such as:

- Networking and interaction opportunities within the community
- Free disaster and emergency response training courses
- Gain first hand experience on how public safety and medical personnel will respond in a disaster through hands on drills and exercises
- Sense of pride through community service
- You and your family receive medication first in the event of a disaster



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Training Opportunities

Emergency preparedness volunteer orientation and advance volunteer trainings have been scheduled throughout our nine public health districts. All volunteer training sessions are free of charge and CEUs are offered. The training calendar will appear in the next publication of *The VIPR Update*.

Exercises and Drills

April 17, 2008, Tunica, MS ~Northwest Public Health District I: A full scale disaster exercise drill will be held to test the operation of a Point of Dispensing Site (POD). This exercise offers the opportunity to observe and assist in the operation of a mass medication dispensing clinic. Persons who wish to participate by posing as a disaster victim, should register by contacting Pamela Nutt or Laveta Moody-Thomas at (601) 576-7680 or by email to: pamela.nutt@msdh.state.ms.us or laveta.moody-thomas@msdh.state.ms.us
