

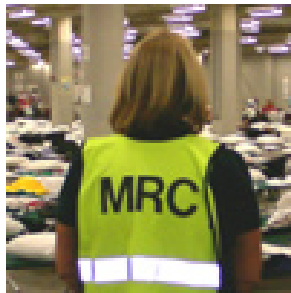
VIPR Update

Mississippi State Department of Health

New Medical Reserve Corps Units Define Volunteerism

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The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) is proud to announce our most recent additions to the volunteer ranks! Within the past few months, two new Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) units have been established in the state. The North Central Mississippi Medical Reserve Corps unit is administered by the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, with oversight and technical support from the City of Oxford Emergency Management Agency and Baptist Memorial Hospital of North MS. This unit serves a community located in North Central Mississippi covering an area of 679 square miles which includes the City of Oxford, the University of Mississippi main campus, and a daily population of over 50,000 citizens. The Mississippi Gulf Coast Medical Reserve Corps unit is administered by and housed within the Mississippi Gulf Coast Black Nurses Association; a non-profit local professional organization with current membership of 75 Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, retired nurses and student nurses residing and/or working in the Gulf Coast service areas of (Harrison, Hancock, and Jackson County). These new volunteer service groups formed in response to a recognized need and desire to serve and protect their local communities, not just during times of disasters or emergencies, but year round. The Medical Reserve Corps program was created after President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address, in which he asked all Americans to volunteer in support of their country. The MRC is comprised of organized medical and public health professionals who serve as volunteers to respond to natural disasters and emergencies. These volunteers assist communities nationwide during emergencies and for ongoing efforts in public health.

The need for trained supplemental medical and public health personnel to assist with emergency operations was highlighted after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Many medical and public health professionals sought to support emergency relief efforts, but there was no organized approach to channel their efforts. The MRC program provides the structure necessary to deploy medical and public health personnel in response to an emergency, as it identifies specific, trained, credentialed personnel available and ready to respond to emergencies.

What does the name Medical Reserve Corps mean to our community?

Each community is different, and these differences may require alternative approaches to natural disasters and emergencies. The terms "medical" and "reserve" indicate that trained personnel are available to respond to emergencies requiring support to the community's health and medical resources. "Corps" refers to an organized body of individuals with a similar function, in keeping with the example of Citizen Corps. Despite differences among communities, all communities can benefit from the MRC and can understand the MRC similarly. The "medical" in Medical Reserve Corps does not limit MRC units to medical professionals. Individuals without medical training can fill essential supporting roles.

The direction of the MRC program exists at the national, state, and local levels. Each level has key personnel responsible for overseeing activities at their respective level. At the national level, the MRC program is run by the Office of Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps, which is headquartered in the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General. It functions as a clearinghouse for information and best practices to help communities establish, implement, and maintain MRC units nationwide. At the state level, the MSDH Office of Emergency Planning and Response (OEPR) coordinates activities of the local units through the State Volunteer/MRC/VIPR coordinator. All local MRCs have unit leaders. MRC is a specialized component of Citizen Corps,



a national network of volunteers dedicated to ensuring hometown security. When possible, MRC units collaborate with their local Citizen Corps Council to better protect, prepare, and serve their communities. Other components of Citizen Corps include the programs Neighborhood Watch, Volunteers in Police Service, and Community Emergency Response Team.

The new units have been extremely busy recently conducting outreach, education, and community preparedness on pandemic flu and seasonal flu issues, as well as recruitment of new members, emergency preparedness training sessions, health disparities prevention conferences, health fairs, and other worthwhile public health endeavors.

Come Play with US!

National Disaster Medical System Exercise

The National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) is a federally coordinated system that augments the Nation's medical response capability. The overall purpose of the NDMS is to supplement an integrated National medical response capability for assisting State and local authorities in dealing with the medical impacts of major peacetime disasters and to provide support to the military and the Department of Veterans Affairs medical systems in caring for casualties evacuated back to the U.S. from overseas armed conventional conflicts.

The National Response Framework utilizes the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), as part of the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Preparedness and Response, under Emergency Support Function #8 (ESF #8), Health and Medical Services, to support Federal agencies in the management and coordination of the Federal medical response to major emergencies and federally declared disasters including:

- Natural Disasters
- Major Transportation Accidents
- Technological Disasters
- Acts of Terrorism including Weapons of Mass Destruction Events

MSDH, in collaboration with the Department of Veteran Affairs, will conduct a disaster response exercise during the last week of February 2010. This ambitious undertaking will involve many different federal, state, and local medical and emergency response entities working together to achieve this mission. Volunteers are needed to serve as actors on February 24 – 25, 2010. If you are interested in participating in this valuable training and would like further details, please contact Laveta Thomas via email to laveta.moody-thomas@msdh.state.ms.us or by phone to (601) 933-6872. This is an excellent opportunity to learn more and receive training in emergency response.

Mass Fatality Conference Planned for Gulf Coast

The Mississippi State Department of Health Office of Emergency Planning and Response Bureau of Emergency Preparedness and Response will host the second annual Mass Fatality Conference on March 8 – 10, 2010 at the IP Casino Hotel in Biloxi, MS. This year's conference theme is "Mass Fatalities: The First 72 Hours". This theme will focus on sharing of lessons learned and bringing a better understanding of critical emergency response issues encountered immediately and within the first 72 hours of emergencies involving mass fatalities; as well as providing solutions to those critical issues.

Who should come: Coroners, Funeral Home Directors, EMA Directors, EMS and Law Enforcement officials. Stay tuned for more information. Registration will be available via fax, USPS and online.

King Holiday National Day of Service

In 1994 Congress passed the King Holiday and Service Act, designating the King Holiday as a national day of volunteer service. Instead of a day off from work or school, Congress asked Americans of all backgrounds and ages to celebrate Dr. King's legacy by turning community concerns into citizen action. The King Day of Service brings together people who might not ordinarily meet, breaks down barriers that have divided us in the past, leads to better understanding and ongoing relationships, and is an opportunity to recruit new volunteers for your ongoing work.

Many of the projects started on King Day continue to engage volunteers beyond the holiday and impact the community year-round. Although the scope of the event grows every year, many people still are not aware of the service component of the holiday. By encouraging the participation of as many organizations as possible, next year's King Day of Service could be the biggest and best ever, engaging more people in service that honors Dr. King's life and teachings.



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***The Volunteers in Preparedness Registry (VIPR) 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 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 a product of the public health emergency volunteer program. Visit the VIPR website at <http://volunteer.msdh.state.ms.us> to register and create your own secured personal profile.*

Training Opportunities

Words to Inspire

"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth."

--Muhammad Ali

I always wondered why somebody didn't do something about that. Then I realized I was somebody.

--Lily Tomlin

Happy Holidays and Wishes for a Prosperous New Year!

