



Central District Health Department

Medical Reserve Corps

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September Is National Preparedness Month

In anticipation of National Preparedness Month, President Obama recently unveiled “United We Serve”, an extended call to service challenging Americans to help lay a new foundation for growth in our country by engaging in sustained, meaningful community service. The initiative will be led by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency dedicated to fostering service in communities across the U.S. Since his inauguration, the President has called on all Americans to serve their communities and be part of building a better future for our country.



The “United We Serve” summer initiative began on June 22nd and will build up to the National Day of Service and Remembrance on September 11th. The National Day of Service and Remembrance was created by the Edward Kennedy Serve America Act, signed by the President in April to encourage and facilitate community service throughout the Nation.

During this summer, the President is calling on Americans to identify needs within their communities, engage in meaningful service to create change, and stay engaged with those projects long after the official event is over. The President’s call focuses on four key areas where everyone can have a continuing impact in their community:

- education
- energy and the environment
- health and safety
- community renewal.

The goal of “United We Serve” is to help make volunteerism and community service part of the daily lives of all Americans in order to help build a new foundation, one community at a time.

Along with promoting action by Americans within their communities, National Preparedness Month also helps educate and raise awareness about the importance of emergency preparedness.



To learn more about community preparedness efforts and what you can do to be better prepared, go to www.ready.gov, or www.citizen corps.gov to learn more about “United We Serve”.

We're A Tobacco Free Zone



To protect the health of **everyone** at CDHD, no smoking or other tobacco use is permitted in our facilities or on our property, both indoors and out. **Thank you for your cooperation.**



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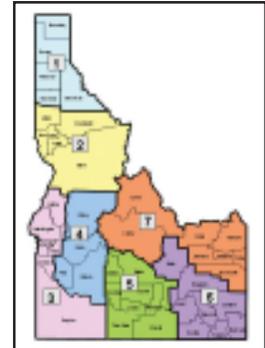
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LOCAL

VOLUNTEER IDAHO

Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Professionals, or ESAR-VHP is a federal requirement that has been installed to provide guidance and assistance for the development of standardized Local-State-Federal coordination of volunteer health professionals. Its mission is to develop a unified and systematic way to register, classify, and verify the credentials of volunteer health professionals in advance of an emergency or disaster. Each state in the US is required to have an ESAR-VHP program as part of their preparedness and response plan and it will serve as one more way to improve the nation's ability to prepare for and respond to public health emergencies.

In fulfilling our requirements, and because we consistently strive to improve our readiness to respond to disasters here in Idaho and within our health district, we are transitioning all of our volunteer records to the new ESAR-VHP compliant system called "Volunteer Idaho". This system enables us to verify the credentials of our volunteers by comparing them to Federal and State licensing board data prior to calling them for duty.



Volunteers in our new system will have tools available that will enable them to keep track of their volunteer efforts and receive notifications of volunteer opportunities electronically, in real time. The system will also automatically notify medical volunteers when their professional license is about to expire.

In order to facilitate the implementation of our new system, we would like to invite you to the new site to register. Please go to www.volunteeridaho.com, click on the area of the map that denotes Public Health District 4, and follow instructions.

Please feel free to contact me, Mary Barlow, at mbarlow@cdhd.idaho.gov or 321-2215 if you have any questions or if you need any assistance with the registration process.

Medical Reserve Corps Orientation Held

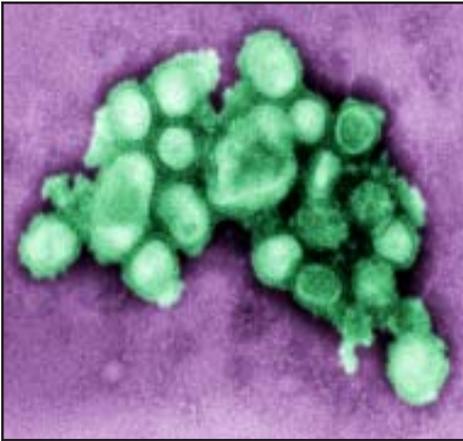
Two MRC new member orientations were held this quarter to give new MRC volunteers a greater understanding of the program and their role as volunteers in supporting Central District Health Department (CDHD) in a public health emergency.

The 2-hour session discussed public health's role in a public health emergency, the mission of CDHD, and the MRC program's goals, policies and procedures.

MRC Orientation is not strictly for new volunteers. All members are encouraged to attend anytime they are interested in a program "refresher."

The next MRC new member orientation is scheduled for **Thursday, September 10th, 6:30pm-8:30-pm**, at the Central District Health Department office in Boise. Contact Mary at mbarlow@cdhd.idaho.gov or 321-2215 if you have any questions or to sign up.

Novel H1N1 - "Swine Flu" (update)



Infection with the novel influenza A (H1N1) virus, initially known as "Swine Flu", is ongoing in the United States. First detected in April 2009, the virus is spreading from person-to-person and sparking a growing outbreak of illness in the United States and around the world.

As of August 21, 2009, there were close to 50,000 confirmed cases, 7,983 hospitalizations and 522 deaths reported in the US. This case count is considered a substantial underestimation of the actual numbers of cases. The majority of those infected report experiencing reasonably mild symptoms similar to seasonal flu and rely on home-care. Most are not tested for influenza. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that there have been more than 1 million cases of novel H1N1 flu in the United States.

It's uncertain at this time how severe novel H1N1 will be in the general population as the outbreak progresses. It is likely that illness will continue to occur over the summer and that we will see novel H1N1 illness and death during the upcoming U.S. flu season in the fall and winter. CDC anticipates that novel H1N1 viruses will co-circulate with regular seasonal influenza viruses over our influenza season. The timing, spread and severity of novel H1N1 virus – in addition to our regular seasonal influenza viruses - are uncertain.

Certain groups of people, including the elderly, young children, pregnant women, and individuals with certain medical conditions, are at higher risk of medical complications when infected with seasonal flu strains. However, in cases of novel H1N1 influenza, pregnant women and those with certain medical conditions are at higher risk of medical complications. Low rates of infection have been seen in adults over the age of 64, which may indicate previous exposure to a similar flu virus strain and natural immunity.

In preparation for potential increased numbers of cases, the CDC released a portion of its pandemic Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) supplies. These medications and supplies have been strategically distributed within the state's seven Public Health Districts so if community-wide shortages occur, additional supplies will be available.

H1N1 Symptoms and How To Prevent Its Spread

Symptoms of the H1N1 infection are similar to seasonal flu, and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches, chills and fatigue. Some people have also reported diarrhea and vomiting. Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing. It's important to note that people cannot contract the infection from eating pork.

The most important things you and your family can do to protect yourselves against the flu are the same things you do to protect against any other flu virus.

- Get vaccinated.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often, especially after being out in public, or after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.
- Cover your cough or sneeze, or cough into your elbow.
- If you are sick, stay home from work or school. Protect your co-workers and friends. Please don't travel when you are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread easily that way.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



H1N1 VACCINE Update

One of the best ways to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated. The CDC is working aggressively with manufacturers to develop an H1N1 vaccine.

The novel H1N1 vaccine is expected to be available in the fall. More specific dates cannot be provided at this time as vaccine availability depends on several factors including manufacturing time and time needed to conduct clinical trials.

We do not expect there to be a shortage of H1N1 vaccine, but availability and demand can be unpredictable. CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has recommended that certain groups of the population receive the novel H1N1 vaccine when it first becomes available:

- pregnant women
- people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- healthcare and emergency medical services personnel
- persons between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old
- people ages of 25 through 64 years of age who are at higher risk because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems

Current studies indicate that the risk for infection among persons age 65 or older is less than that of younger age groups. Therefore, ACIP recommendations suggest that programs and providers offer vaccination to people over the age of 65 as vaccine supply and demand among younger age groups is met.



MRC Involvement In H1N1 Activities

In April, the Central District Health Department opened a "Swine Flu Hotline" to address some of the public's questions and concerns about the novel strain of Influenza. MRC volunteers spent a week answering hotline calls from concerned community residents and health care providers.

We don't know how serious of an issue H1N1 will be in the fall, however we anticipate many opportunities for MRC volunteers to assist in CDHD's response. We will likely reopen the Swine Flu Hotline to answer questions from the public, and strongly anticipate needing MRC assistance in the administration of H1N1 vaccine once it becomes available.

Check out the
Novel H1N1 Hotline:
321-2222



TRAINING

There are a number of valuable training and educational opportunities to be found locally and free to MRC members. Many of them can be found through the **Idaho State University (ISU) Institute of Emergency Management Idaho Learning Management System (LMS)**. ISU-IEM manages many of the emergency response courses for emergency response professionals in Idaho. To access the training available through the LMS, log in and register at www.idahoprepares.com . If you would like more information about the LMS or any of the classes available, please contact CDHD Health Educator, Kathryn Quinn at KQuinn@cdhd.idaho.gov or 327-8597.

FEMA and the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) offer self-paced courses designed for the general public and those that have emergency management and response responsibilities. All are offered free-of-charge. To get a complete listing of courses available through FEMA Independent Study Programs, go to: <http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.asp> .

Cultural Competency Curriculum for Disaster Preparedness and Crisis Response

The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Minority Health (OMH) released on June 30, 2009 its latest cultural competency e-learning program –*Cultural Competency Curriculum for Disaster Preparedness and Crisis Response*. According to Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health, Garth Graham, M.D., M.P.H., “The program trains individuals such as emergency managers, first responders, social workers, and disaster mental health workers in effectively serving culturally and linguistically diverse populations at every phase of the disaster – preparedness, response and recovery.” <https://www.thinkculturalhealth.org/ccdpcr/>

Thank You Volunteers

We would like to thank those MRC members that recently took time out of their busy schedule to lend a helping hand to CDHD and their community this quarter.

During the initial H1N1 (Swine Flu) outbreak this past spring, CDHD opened a “Swine Flu Hotline” to address some of the public’s questions and concerns about the novel strain of Influenza which came to be called H1N1. Volunteers did a wonderful job answering incoming hotline calls from concerned community residents and health care providers. **Thank you Dale Argyle, Sally Kane, Anne Koster, Carol Moreno, Susan Schriver, Julie Taddicken, and Sally Thomas!**



Thank You
“Swine Flu Hotline” Volunteers

In late May, CDHD began working on expanding the number of local child day care centers that are part of our Health Alert Network (HAN). The HAN provides users with automatic, up-to-the-minute health bulletins and other urgent public health related information. Volunteers assisted with follow-up calls to the day care centers to assist them through the computer-based registration process. **Thanks to Darcy Barnett, Lowell Burdell and Kathy Reavy** for their work on this project and helping make our community a healthier place for our children!



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A Look Ahead

September - National Preparedness Month

September 10th, 2009 – MRC New Member Orientation
6:30pm – 8:30pm, Central District Health Dept., Boise



We want to hear from you

This is YOUR newsletter! We want your help in making it as interesting and useful as possible for our MRC members – just like you. Please share your ideas, news, and suggestions with us. E-mail Mary at mbarlow@cdhd.idaho.gov or call 321-2215.

Visit us online at: www.cdhd.idaho.gov