



Albany County Medical Reserve Corp Volunteer Newsletter

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The Albany County Department of Health's 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.

Populations with Special Needs in Emergencies

On Monday, March 17, 2008 Dr. Kristine Gebbie, *Director, Center for Health Policy Columbia University School of Nursing*, presented an excellent program on working with populations who have "Special Needs in Emergencies." According to 2000 United States Census Data more than 48,000 people in Albany County have identified themselves as having a disability. A 2005 Harris Survey found that 54% of people with disabilities know whom to contact about emergency plans in their community but only 47% of this group have made plans to safely evacuate their homes. Though 47% sounds positive, it leaves more than 25,000 disabled residents without a plan to evacuate in an emergency.

Dr. Gebbie reinforced the important point that any member of the public can very easily become part of a special needs population given the right circumstances. For those people who rely on contact lenses to see, what would they do if they evacuated without contact solution or glasses? They would likely need help reading signs and filling out paperwork. For those people who take medicine for chronic diseases, what would happen if they were sheltering at home or placed in a shelter but did not have their daily medications? It could be life threatening.

For this and many more reasons, having a personal/family preparedness plan is vitally important. Dr. Gebbie recommends that everyone create a "personal readiness checklist" of the supplies you should carry with you at all times and the supplies that need to go in your go-kit. This also includes a health information card which contains information regarding your disability or health conditions, medications, allergies, communication needs, assistive technology devices, durable medical equipment and any assistance you may need in the event of an emergency. For more information on creating a health information card, visit

<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/healthcard.html>.

The Albany County Sheriff's Department has created a Countywide Registry for Persons In Need. The program is designed to assist the special needs community who are physically unable or require assistance to evacuate their homes during an emergency situation. The Registry is voluntary and all information obtained will be utilized for emergency purposes only and will be strictly confidential. The applications should be completed and returned to the Albany County Sheriff's Department, Office of Community and Emergency Services, 75 Remsen Street, Cohoes, New York 12047.

Applications are available on the Albany County Sheriff's website: www.albanycountysheriff.com (Click on forms and then click on Evacuation Registration Request Form.) You may also contact either Linda Nash at 720-8030 Lnash@albanycounty.com or Garry Horne at 720-8029. Ghorne@albanycounty.com to have applications sent by mail or with any questions.

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March Notification Drill

On Wednesday, March 12th the Albany County Department of Health conducted a quarterly notification drill for Albany County Medical Reserve Corp volunteers. The results were the following:

- 97 (28%) volunteers responded to the call
- 84 (24%) volunteers responded they were able to report
- The average time to report was 22 minutes
- 24 (7%) volunteers hung up on the call
- 193 (56%) calls went to answering machines

The next volunteer notification call will occur between April and June. Please remember to provide updated contact information to the MRC if you change your cell or home phone numbers.

Upcoming MRC Trainings

We have offered a number of trainings this year and I want to thank all of you who have attended, We have two additional trainings scheduled for this spring. Please contact Jill at 447-4633 or jill.dunkel@albanycounty.com if you are interested in attending.

Family Preparedness

As an MRC Volunteer for Albany County, you play an important role in helping us prepare for a disaster situation. It is vital that you and your family take the steps necessary to prepare for an emergency or disaster situation at home. This program will teach you the steps you should take to create a family preparedness plan.

Thursday, May 8, 2008 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm at the Albany County Department of Health

Speaker: Clayton Kolb, Regional Coordinator, NYS Citizen Preparedness Program

Sandwiches and salads will be provided

Weapons of Mass Destruction Awareness

The training provides an overview of the basic level response to such topics as chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) incidents, and suspicious events.

Tuesday, June 3, 2008 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm at the Albany County Department of Health

Speaker: Captain John Layton, Critical Incident-Emergency Management Unit,

Albany County Sheriff's Department

Dinner will be provided

President's Challenge

The United States Surgeon General's Office has engaged local Medical Reserve Chapters across the country to encourage MRC volunteers to participate in the President's Challenge for a Healthier Nation. This initiative started on March 20th but it is not too late to participate. Everyone can be involved in making "active" activities part of a regular family, work or recreational routine. Whether exercising in the morning with colleagues, going for a walk after dinner, hiking on the weekend, going to the park instead of the movies, or playing basketball in the driveway, the opportunities for physical activity are endless. For more information on how to join, visit <http://www.presidentschallenge.org/>.



Coming Soon...www.albanycounty.com/mrc to include newsletters, photos, and upcoming training information.