

MRC Volunteer Staffs Functional Needs Shelter—Barbara Dickisson

Although I have been a member of the Morris County Medical Reserve Corp. for several years I never volunteered for deployment until Hurricane Irene when I checked my Email and it said that help was needed at the Mennen Arena where approximately four hundred evacuees from Atlantic City were being sheltered. It sounded as if they really needed help and I had no good reason not to go. They were asking for people to do twelve hour shifts. I responded that I was available and willing to help on whatever shift I was needed. I immediately got a response back asking me to come at 6 PM. What a shocking site! When I walked in, the entire arena floor was covered with cots and people on them. Close to 400 people. This was a Red Cross shelter. People there were of all ages from very young, 2 weeks, and very old. Many had chronic illnesses. Some were on oxygen and even brought their large tanks of oxygen with them. One man had a tracheotomy tube for the last 8 years and was unable to sleep lying down. There were diabetics who brought their medications as did most of the people but a couple forgot to bring the glucometers to test their sugar. Others forgot to bring their medications because they had little time to get their things together for the evacuation. They were taken to two different facilities before being brought to Mennen and I am told they had not eaten in two days. It was sad to know that these folks had been uprooted from their homes, to know what they had been through and then as of last night not knowing if they would even have a home to return to. When gathering my personal items to take with me, I happened to think of taking some magazines to share with those who might be interested in looking at them. I thought it would give them something to do to pass the time. I meandered up and down the rows of cots talking to those who were not sleeping, offering to help them if they needed anything, bringing them bottles of water or Gatorade

and assisting those needing help to get to the ladies room. This is the way I spent my night from 6 PM until 6 AM when my shift ended. The most impressive thing about the whole experience was to witness the assistance provided by many individuals and organizations. In addition to the Red Cross, support was given by Atlantic EMS who had several vehicles on site and transported approximately 24 people to area hospitals, MMC, St Clare's and Chilton. They were there on standby to help in whatever way they could. A recliner chair was brought from one of the hospitals for the man with the tracheotomy who was not able to lie down and said that he had not slept in three days. Glucometers were provided to monitor the blood sugar of those who had forgotten theirs. Dr. Ritter from MMC ED was on hand for several hours seeing individuals needing medical attention and wrote prescriptions for those who had forgotten to bring their medications. One man had an infected leg wound which he received from a dog bite just prior to the evacuation. Dr. Ritter wrote a prescription for antibiotics for him. All the prescriptions were taken to MMC pharmacy where they were filled and brought back to Mennen where they were given to the people needing them. There was even liquid Tylenol for the 2 yr. old with a broken arm. Dr. Vanderschaft and Dr. Gary Anderson spent the night to be available for those needing their services. Everyone helped in whatever way they could. Plenty of food was on hand procured by the Red Cross from various businesses. Two people went to Target in Rockaway where they received \$500 worth of donated items including diapers, stuffed animals and crafts for the children.

As sad as I felt, it left me with such a good feeling to have been there to help these people. I will definitely volunteer again.

Morris County Office of
Health Management
PO Box 900
Morristown, NJ 07963
Phone: 973-631-5484
Fax: 973-631-5490
E-mail: astoller@co.morris.nj.us

Carlos Perez, Jr., Health Officer
Namitha Narayan, Epidemiologist
Cindie Bella, Public Health
Nurse/MRC Coordinator
Arlene Stoller, Health Education
Specialist/PHENS Coordinator
Denise Maddaloni, Administrative:
973-631-5484
Donna Vreeland, Administrative
Assistant
www.morrishealth.org

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Public Health
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Medical Reserve Corps:

Letter From MCOHM Health Officer *Carlos Perez, Jr.*

On Sunday, August 28, 2011, Hurricane Irene made landfall in Brigantine, New Jersey. Weeks prior to the storm's landfall, state, county, and local Office of Emergency Management officials closely monitored the storm's progress and projected path. Preparations for possible landfall were also commenced. These pre-storm efforts proved vital to emergency response efforts during and after the storm. The storm's intensity required evacuation of residents and the opening of emergency shelters in various Morris County municipalities. On Saturday, August 27, 2011, the County opened an emergency shelter at the

Mennen Arena in Morris Township to house evacuees from Atlantic County. Numerous members of the Morris County Medical Reserve Corps were deployed to the shelter and provided much needed assistance. MRC volunteers performed assessments and tended to the needs of evacuees. In addition, Medical Reserve Corps Volunteers also assisted with the handling of calls to the 2-1-1 call center in Parsippany, NJ. Many MRC members also agreed to remain on stand-by in the event additional resources were needed. Hurricane Irene resulted in significant flooding and

property damage throughout Morris County. Recovery efforts are still ongoing in many communities. The storm highlighted the dedication and importance of the Morris County Medical Reserve Corps. I wish to thank all MRC Volunteers who assisted with shelter and call center efforts. Your assistance proved invaluable. I hope you find this addition of the MRC Newsletter informative and I look forward to working with you in protecting the health and wellness of our citizens in 2012.

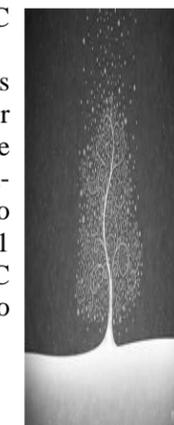
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Hurricane Irene—October Snow 2011

No one can predict when a disaster may strike such as a hurricane that caused severe flooding, an October snowstorm that left residents without power, and roads blocked with fallen trees and branches. Yet not being prepared for disasters is worse than the disaster. Fortunately for Morris County, we have an MRC that was willing to volunteer when the call went out for help with staffing a functional needs shelter and staffing the 2-1-1

call center. Over 30 MRC volunteered their time. From each of these experiences we are better able to prepare for the next emergency. The agencies involved with the shelter have met to identify gaps to update our shelter plans. 2-1-1 has a better idea of when MRC volunteers would be needed to increase their surge capacity.



Training Dates*
February 29—Special Needs—Special Response
March 24—Call Center Surge Capacity Hotline Training
April 2—Radiation Awareness
April 26—Cultural Competency for Public Health/MRC
May 19—Core Competency Catch Up (includes Disaster Awareness, Orientation, POD Management and START Triage)
June—Psychological First Aid
August 1: General Meeting
September 11—Family and Pet Preparedness
October 29—Intro to Public Health

*Dates to be confirmed and posted online at NJLMN for registration.

FROM THE COORDINATOR—*Cindie Bella, R.N. B.S.N.*

Happy New Years! May it be healthy, happy and safe for all. 2011 turned out to be a very exciting year with our first Northwest Regional (Warren, Sussex, Passaic and Morris) POD exercise and the deployments during Hurricane Irene to the shelter at Mennen Arena and the 211 Call Center. Having such a unified response from our Morris County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) demonstrates the reward of participating

in continuing education. Trainings provide the knowledge and skills needed if and when we are called upon to respond to an emergency. It also provides us with the comfort and familiarity of working together as a team, which was proven during our 2011 deployments. We hope to provide you with another year of interesting and effective trainings. We are still in the process of scheduling additional trainings that have not been listed in this newsletter because we are

working out the details with the instructors. I will continue to notify you of any up-coming trainings via emails. You can always check and see what may be available on the NJLMN. If you are receiving our newsletter and not receiving my emails please contact me at cbella@co.morris.nj.us. I thank you for all your hard work and dedication to our Morris County MRC.

**CORE
COMPETENCIES:**
ICS 100/NIMS 700
MRC Orientation
Psychological First Aid
Family/Pet Disaster Preparedness
POD Management

MRC Staff 2-1-1 Hotline: Laura Marx, Director 2-1-1

For the past several years, the Morris County MRC and NJ 2-1-1 have been poised to work together in a disaster. As Hurricane Irene neared NJ, it became apparent that NJ 2-1-1 might not be able to handle the surge in call volume as the NJ Office of Emergency Management suggested the public call 2-1-1 for help preparing for the storm. With a call volume steadily increasing even before the hurricane arrived, NJ 2-1-1 requested MRC volunteers who may be interested in staffing the phones. Five MRC volunteers were deployed to NJ 2-1-1's office in Parsippany as the hurricane approached that Saturday afternoon. The volunteers received an orientation about how NJ 2-1-1 responds in a disaster; providing information on evacuations, safety tips, flood

control, pet friendly hotels to name a few and how to provide reassurance to those citizens truly frightened by what was to come. Without delay, the MRC volunteers were on the phones with the 2-1-1 staff answering calls. Those calls requiring higher level knowledge were easily transferred to a supervisor until the MRC volunteers were comfortable and confident in answering most requests. NJ 2-1-1, with the help of the MRC, answered over 4300 calls in those first days. This just would not have been possible without the support of the Morris County MRC! The volunteers that staffed 2-1-1 were not aware of this service. 2-1-1 directs callers to a variety of resources, staffs an addiction hotline as well as the emergency shelter hotline. They were soon to experience how organized 2-1-1 is to give and get

information. Whiteboards were used to update those on the phones with new information. As one of the volunteers said "Some of the callers who were home alone just needed to hear a reassuring voice knowing there was someone they could talk to." Another volunteer said "It was a very satisfying deployment in that I felt I was really providing a valuable service." In October, new MRC volunteers were trained alongside of NJ 2-1-1 in preparation for the next opportunity. This training, based on recent experience, could truly define the role of an MRC volunteer in support of the NJ 2-1-1 system during a disaster. We hope others will continue to volunteer for this important assignment. There will be a training in 2012 for others who may want to be prepared to assist 2-1-1 in other situations.



2-1-1 is an information and referral system accessible by dialing 211 from land-lines and most cell phones. It may also be reached by dialing 877-652-1148. Visit them on their website for a database of local resources at www.nj211.org.

Emergency Responder Safety—Hurricanes and Flood Response



Immunization recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for disaster responders are:

Tetanus: In accordance with current guidelines, responders should receive a tetanus booster if they have not been vaccinated for tetanus during the past 10 years. Td (tetanus/diphtheria) or Tdap (tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis) can be used. While documentation is preferred it is not required.

Hepatitis B: Hepatitis B vaccine series for persons who will be performing direct patient care or otherwise expected to have contact with bodily fluids.

There is no indication for the following vaccines for disaster responders in the U.S.:

Hepatitis A: The vaccine

takes at least one to two weeks to provide sufficient immunity and there is low probability of exposure.

Typhoid: Again low probability of exposure.

Meningococcal: No expectation of increased risk among emergency responders.

Flood and Storm Cleanup for Disaster Responders:

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) advises workers to be aware of the potential dangers involved and the proper safety precautions.

Hazards that could be encountered include: electrical hazards, carbon monoxide, musculoskeletal hazards, heat stress, motor vehicles, hazardous

materials, fire, confined spaces and falls.

Before beginning any response, deployment workers are to be briefed concerning the health and exposure risks of concern. Monitoring for heat stress, air contaminants, noise as well as providing appropriate personal protective equipment is the responsibility of the agency assigning responders.

The danger of the flood does not end when the rain ceases. Clean up crews must work together and look out for one another to ensure safety. Hard hats, goggles, heavy work gloves, and watertight boots with steel toe and insole are basic requirements for most work.

First aid, even for minor cuts and burns, is very important during flood cleanup.

Immediately clean all wounds and cuts with soap and clean water.

Traumatic Stress: Depending on the size and scale of the disaster, emergency team responders are at risk of experiencing what psychologists refer to as traumatic incident—an incident that may involve exposure to catastrophic events, severely injured children or adults, dead bodies or body parts, or the loss of colleagues.

You may be provided with a briefing on signs and symptoms of stress, what you can do on-site and at home to take care of yourself, and counseling options available.

For more information visit: www.cdc.gov/disasters

Social Media and Emergency Response

During Hurricane Irene, Morris County OEM staffed the Emergency Operations Center with the county's web manager, Carol Spencer. Her social media expertise was used to post for online viewing and text messaging the changing information residents needed. A live blog on the OEM website informed residents as to which streets were open or closed. Other information helped residents know where to get ice and water, where to charge electric devices and how to apply for FEMA assistance. The county FACEBOOK page, <http://www.facebook.com/>

MorrisCountyNJ also had updated information. Twitter, another social media tool, was used to get information to people on their cell phones. You can follow Morris County on twitter.com. Morris County Office of Emergency Management has a social media alert notification system, MCURgent. You can follow MCURgent, which is used during multi-jurisdictional situations, at: Twitter.com/MCURgent; Facebook.com/MCURgent. TEXT "Follow MCURgent" to 40404 for text alerts. Morris County Office of Health Management shares

information using social media tools as well. You can follow us at twitter.com/morrishealth, or on our website, during an emergency we maintain a live blog to post pertinent health information. If you haven't visited our website lately, find us at www.morrishealth.org, where we update the community with a variety of preparedness and health information.



H5N1 Avian Influenza 2011 Update

6 cases
1 deaths
Egypt

3 Cases
1 death
Cambodia

World wide since 2003:
525 human cases
310 deaths
WHO continues surveillance for H5N1