



MRC MINUTE

Philadelphia Medical Reserve Corps Newsletter



Volume 1, Issue 2 November, 2007

Philadelphia Department
of Public Health
500 South Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19146

John F. Domzalski
Health Commissioner

Joseph C. Cronauer
Deputy Health
Commissioner

Caroline C. Johnson, M.D.
Director, Division of
Disease Control

Letter from the Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator

Dear Philadelphia Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer,

“Protect yourself and the ones you love against the FLU. Get vaccinated!”
“Get vaccinated. Don’t get flu. Don’t spread flu.” “Protect yourself. Protect
your family.” Have you heard these campaign messages? Did you get your
annual influenza vaccination?

The CDC has announced National Influenza Vaccination Week from
November 26 to December 2, 2007. The goal is to emphasize the importance
of continuing influenza (flu) vaccination, as well as promote greater use of flu
vaccine through the months of November, December and beyond. The 2007-
2008 Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that
all people, including school-aged children, who want to reduce the risk of
becoming ill with influenza or of transmitting influenza to others should be
vaccinated. All healthcare personnel who have any contact with patients or
residents should be vaccinated against influenza, including all persons working
in hospitals, outpatient care settings, nursing home and chronic care facilities
and students in training for healthcare professions.

As a Philadelphia MRC volunteer, personal and family preparedness should be
your first priority. Preparing yourself and your family will make it easier for you
to assist others in a disaster or emergency situation. The Philadelphia
Department of Public Health encourages you to receive the annual flu
vaccination as part of your personal preparedness plan. Remember that the
annual vaccination not only protects you, but all of the people around you.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your time and
commitment to the Philadelphia MRC. Have a safe and healthy holiday season
and a prosperous New Year.

Warmest regards,
Marie Carbonetto, R.Ph., MRC Coordinator

Inside this issue:

Philadelphia’s Drill Testing Emergency Delivery of Antibiotics	2
Upcoming Seminars	3
Update from National MRC	3
Resources of Interest	4
Publication of Interest	4
MRC Volunteer Network	4

Contact Information:
Marie Carbonetto, R.Ph.
MRC Coordinator
E: Marie.Carbonetto@
phila.gov
P: 215-685-6861
<http://www.phila.gov/mrc>

Philadelphia's Drill Testing Emergency Delivery of Antibiotics by the U.S. Postal Service



As part of the Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI), a national program focused on increasing the capacity of major metropolitan centers to rapidly deliver medications or vaccine during wide-scale biologic emergencies, the City of Philadelphia has the option to plan to work with United States Postal Service (USPS) letter carriers to deliver an initial dose of medication to residents. In Philadelphia, this option might be used in the initial 12 hours of a public health emergency requiring medication distribution, as medication centers or Points of Dispensing (PODs) are set up.

Philadelphia households. Everyone in the community would be advised to stay in their homes and wait for a bottle of medication to be delivered. Then the following day, medication centers or Points of Dispensing (PODs) would open and people would be directed to go and receive additional medications, if needed.

In the event of an attack involving biological agents such as anthrax, mail carriers would deliver free antibiotics directly to

On Sunday, June 24, the City of Philadelphia tested this model of medication delivery. USPS letter carriers delivered empty cardboard boxes with informational flyers as part of an emergency preparedness exercise. Participants in the planning and implementation of the drill included the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Postal Service and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health. Additional participating agencies included the Philadelphia Police Department, the Philadelphia Office of Emergency Management, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the National Association of Letter Carriers, and the United States Postal Inspection Service.



Forty-eight USPS letter carriers, each accompanied by a Philadelphia police officer, fanned out to approximately 49,000 households served by the Germantown, Boulevard and Fairmount postal stations. The cardboard boxes had the approximate dimensions of a unit-of-use bottle of pills. The Health Department took several steps to ensure that local residents knew what to expect on June 24 and understood that there was no actual emergency. Public information during and after the drill included informational flyers, a City telephone hotline, postings on the City of Philadelphia's website and a press conference.

Next steps include incorporating the observations and lessons learned into Philadelphia's Postal Service medication distribution plan, so that the plan can be used throughout the entire city, if necessary.

Upcoming Philadelphia MRC Volunteer Seminars

Pandemic Influenza Planning and Preparedness Seminar

Thursday, December 13, 2007 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Target Audience: Current MRC volunteers and anyone interested in learning more about the MRC program

Location: DePalma Auditorium

Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, 1025 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA

Enter via the ED entrance on 10th Street between Sansom and Walnut Sts. Walk straight down the hallway until you see a group of 4 elevators on your left. Take elevator 1 level down to the auditorium. A light dinner will be served.

Presenter: Steve Alles, MD, Medical Epidemiologist, Philadelphia Department of Public Health

Dr. Alles will provide an overview of the pandemic influenza threat and the planning and preparedness activities coordinated by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health. He will discuss recent pandemic influenza healthcare planning initiatives and the role of Philadelphia MRC volunteers during an influenza pandemic.

Volunteer Orientation Seminar

Saturday, January 26, 2008 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Target Audience: Current MRC volunteers who have not attended previously and anyone interested in learning more about the MRC program

Location: To Be Announced

Breakfast and lunch will be served.

Volunteers will prepare for their roles in the Philadelphia Medical Reserve Corps. Topics include: personal preparedness, public health emergency preparedness, mass prophylaxis, basic disaster mental health and weapons of mass destruction. The seminar will conclude with a walk-thru of a simulated medication center or Point of Dispensing (POD).

Please RSVP for both seminars to

Marie.Carbonetto@phila.gov, or online at <http://mrcaalert.phila.gov>.

Update from the National Medical Reserve Corps Office



The National Medical Reserve Corps Region III Unit Leaders Conference was held in Philadelphia on November 13-14, 2007. MRC Leaders from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia and New Jersey shared best practices and strategies to increase the capacity and capabilities of the Medical Reserve Corps program.

Captain Rob Tosatto, Director, National Medical Reserve Corps Program, Office of the Surgeon General, delivered a briefing from the National MRC office. Of particular interest to our local volunteers is the update on federal deployment capability. Captain Tosatto announced that he plans to hire staff to develop policies and procedures for local volunteers who are willing, able and approved MRC members to augment HHS response capabilities during national emergencies. If volunteering outside the local area is of interest to you, stay tuned for further developments.

Resource of Interest

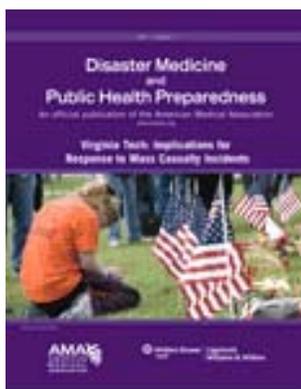


The National MRC website is hosting a series of live, interactive seminars to provide information on a wide variety of topics to MRC leaders and volunteers. These “Webinars” will occur on a regular basis, every six to eight weeks. For upcoming topics, dates and registration visit <http://webcasts.naccho.org>.

Archived Webinars include:

- Psychological First Aid: The Role of MRC Volunteers in Disaster Response
- Antiviral Use, Distribution, Prioritization, Ethics and Equity

Publication of Interest



Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness

Lippincott Williams & Wilkins announced the publication of a special issue of *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, dedicated to lessons learned from the tragedy at Virginia Tech University.

The September issue was made possible by a grant from the National Disaster Life Support Foundation and will be freely accessible to all at the journal's website, <http://www.dmph.org>.

Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness is a peer-reviewed journal by the American Medical Association.

Philadelphia MRC Volunteer Network



Has your contact information changed? Remember to update your volunteer profile at <http://mrcaalert.phila.gov>. Please make sure that all of your contact information is up-to-date. E-mail mrc@phila.gov with any questions.

Are you receiving this newsletter but have yet to sign up for the Philadelphia MRC? Or do you know a colleague who might be interested in joining? Visit <http://www.phila.gov/mrc> for more information.