Rensselaer County
Department of Health

Public Health
Preparedness Program
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Discuss the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) concept and how MRC’s benefit local communities.

2. Describe three essential personal preparedness steps.

3. List three special skills or resources that make Faith Based Organizations particularly valuable in preparedness planning.
The Public Health Role in Emergency Preparedness

- Since September 11th, Public Health has had an increased role in emergency preparedness.
- NYS Department of Health is funded by CDC to provide public health preparedness plans throughout the state.
- Each county is responsible for their own planning.
Shift in Public Health Preparedness Role and Focus...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Focus:</th>
<th>vs.</th>
<th>Priorities of Today</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bioterrorism</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Public Health Preparedness</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>– Anthrax</td>
<td></td>
<td>– All-hazards approach to planning</td>
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<td>– Smallpox</td>
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What is our role?

- Conduct surveillance to monitor unusual disease clusters
- Develop public health preparedness response, and recovery plans
- Provide education to the public
- Provide medical prophylaxis/treatment to all residents in the county in the event of a communicable disease outbreak.
- Work with our community partners
Why Are Faith Based Organizations Important as Community Partners?

- Faith Based Leaders are a trusted source of information for many people.

- Faith Based Organizations have preexisting network of committed volunteers.

- Faith Based Leaders, members, and volunteers are very familiar with the characteristics and special needs of the communities that they serve.
Interviews and focus groups revealed that Faith Based Leaders are interested in partnership with the health department on emergency preparedness issues if health officials take the lead.

“Faith Based Organizations are interested in reaching out to people, and who better for the government to work with than people that want to reach out to people and that aren’t looking for something in return.”
Special Skills and Resources of Faith Based Organizations

- Can use facilities as shelter, food and water distribution center, vaccination site, triage center, hospital, or morgue.

- Volunteer base can be mobilized to provide services to those affected by the emergency.

- Can distribute health messages through church bulletins, signs, bulletin boards, phone trees, email lists, and mentioning information during services.
Special Skills and Resources of Faith Based Organizations

- Faith Based Leaders can help ensure that materials concerning disasters and coping are culturally and ethnically sensitive and available in a variety of languages.

- Faith Based Organizations can work with state and local health departments to help ensure that available medical treatments are distributed equitably.

- Faith Based Organizations and Leaders can help with counseling, establishing security after an event, and maintaining a sense of community.
Faith Based Organizations in NYC collaborated to provide multi-faith services for memorial and prayer.

Local congregations produced handouts for parents on how to talk to their kids about the terrorist attacks and conducted support groups for spouses of survivors so that they could learn about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and ways to help in coping.

Volunteers served on a “ministry of accompaniment” where Christians provided escort around local neighborhoods to those who were Muslim or of Arab descent in order to provide protection to those being harassed or stereotyped.
Example: Hurricane Katrina

- Volunteers from local Faith Based Organizations handed out emergency meals and clothing, rebuilt communities, staffed shelters, helped with clean-up, provided supplies and tools, assisted with long-term housing, financial support, mental health counseling, fundraising, housing advocacy, job search readiness, tax preparation assistance, and after school programs.

- Faith Based Organizations did not receive much direction from government officials but were also not “boxed into the system” and were able to respond to the disaster more quickly.
Current Project

- Conducted literature review on public health preparedness, the role of Faith Based Organizations in health outreach, and ways to reach out to utilize faith based organizations in public health preparedness.

- Used Internet and community resources to compile list of approximately 170 Faith Based Organizations in Rensselaer County.

- Currently reaching out to Faith Based Organizations in order to establish a relationship between FBOs and the Health Department, and to aid FBOs in preparedness planning for their communities.
Emergency Preparedness

• Emergencies can range from inconvenient to devastating. But taking some simple preparedness steps in advance can minimize their impact and make a big difference in ensuring the safety and well-being of individuals, families, businesses and communities.

• Federal, state and local government and the private sector are working hard to prepare and protect the nation, but we all have a role to play.
Personal Preparedness

Three steps to make sure you and your family are prepared in the event of a public health emergency:

• Make a Kit
• Make a Plan
• Be Informed

Source: www.ready.gov
Get an Emergency Supply Kit

• Include basic supplies for your family and pets for three days

• Prepare at least two kits: one for home; a smaller portable kit to take with you if you have to leave; and if possible, kits for your office or car
Emergency Supply Kit

The larger at-home kit should include the following items:

**Food**
- Non-perishable - not requiring refrigeration, cooking or water for preparation
- Examples: canned food, granola bars
- Include a manual can opener, if necessary

**Water**
- One gallon per person and pet per day for three days
- Store in clean, sealed plastic bottles
- Need for water can vary based on climate and special needs
Emergency Preparedness Supplies Calculator

Enter the number of people in your family for each age group below:

- **Adults:** (Age 12 and above) 2
- **Children:** (Age 3-12) 1
- **Toddlers:** (Age 1-2) 1
- **Infants:** (Up to 12 months)
- **Pets:** 1

Source: www.whatifcolorado.com
Results for 2 adults, 1 child, 1 toddler, and 1 pet

72-hour emergency supply kit for this family composition:

• Water
  – 13.5 gallons of water for drinking and sanitation

• Food
  – 75 ounces of grains
    • Box of cereal is 12.9 ounces
  – 63 ounces of meat/beans
    • Can of tuna is 6 ounces
  – 30 cups of milk
    • 1 gallon of milk = 16 cups
  – 27 cups of vegetables
  – 19.5 cups of fruit
  – Pet food

*To calculate food and water quantities for your family, go to www.whatifcolorado.com
Emergency Supply Kit

Radio
• Battery-powered
• With NOAA weather alert function
• Extra batteries

Flashlight
• Extra batteries

First Aid Kit
• With specific items for your family/personal needs

Whistle
• To signal for help if trapped

Wrench or Pliers
• To turn off utilities if necessary
Unique Family Needs

- Consider your family’s unique needs such as older Americans or individuals with disabilities and other special needs. Some items you may want to add to your kit include:
  - Prescription medications
  - Extra pair of prescription glasses
  - Important family documents
  - Formula or diapers for infants
  - Games or toys to entertain children

For a list of additional items, visit Ready.gov
If you have a pet, include pet supplies in your emergency supply kit:

- Food
- Water
- Medicine
- Medical records
- Collar with ID tag
- Harness or leash
- Crate or other pet carrier
- Familiar items, i.e. toys, treats and bedding
- Picture of you and your pet for identification purposes
Make a Family Emergency Plan

• Sit down as a family and plan in advance what you will do in an emergency

• A well thought out plan will allow you to assess the situation, use common sense, and take care of yourself and your loved ones
Family Emergency Plan

- You may not be together as a family when an emergency happens

- Plan in advance how to get in touch with each other and get back together

- Ready.gov has a template to help you get started
Family Emergency Plan Cards

One card for each family member to keep with them at all times.

(In purse, wallet, backpack, etc)

Source: www.ready.gov
Family Emergency Plan Elements

• **Out-of-Town Contact** – In an emergency it might be easier to make a phone call out of town; designate a contact out-of-town to take roll and relay information for your family.

• **School and Work Plans** – Learn about the emergency plans at your workplace and at your children’s schools.

• **Meeting Places** – Choose two places to meet: one in the neighborhood; one outside of the neighborhood.
Stay or Go?

• In some situations authorities may urge you to evacuate
  • Hurricane, flood, fire, etc.
• In other situations, staying where you are and avoiding danger is best
  • If air is contaminated or there are large amounts of debris in the air
• Listen to instructions from local emergency management officials
Evacuating

- Plan where you will go; choose several destinations in different directions
- Plan driving routes; have maps and alternate routes
- If you do not have a car, know public transportation options
- Take your Emergency Supply Kit
- Lock your door
- Take your pets; plan out what pet friendly lodging you will go to in advance
Be Informed

• **LEARN MORE ABOUT**
  • Different types of emergencies and their appropriate responses
  • Which emergencies are more likely to affect your area
  • The emergency plans in your community

• **SEMO’s NY Alerts**
  – All hazards alert and notification web-based system
    • Register to receive emergency information via email, phone, pager, or fax
      – Weather
      – Transportation
      – Chemical, Biological, Nuclear
      – Medical and Public Health...
    – [www.nyalert.gov](http://www.nyalert.gov)

Source: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)
Rensselaer County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

Strengthening the Public Health infrastructure and improving Emergency Preparedness

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Following the 9-11 attacks thousands of unaffiliated volunteers showed up at sites, creating problems:

- No way to ID or credential
- Not covered under liability laws
- No Incident Command System (ICS) training
- Difficult to manage and effectively utilize spontaneous volunteers
The USA Freedom Corps was established by the President after 9/11 to promote volunteer service in America. Citizen Corps is a national network of volunteers dedicated to ensuring hometown security.

The MRC is a specialized component of Citizen Corps.
The mission of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is to improve the health and safety of communities across the country by organizing volunteers to supplement existing emergency response resources when public health is threatened.
MRC Concept

- Community Based-function as a way to locally organize and utilize volunteers
- Establish groups of volunteers with interest in strengthening local public health system and providing help in emergencies
- Integrate with existing community resources
- Identify, credential, train and prepare volunteers in advance
MRC Concepts

- MRC volunteers support ongoing community health, safety and wellness initiatives as well as emergency response.

- Include medical and public health professionals, and citizens with no medical background or training.

- Partnerships are key to optimizing shared resources and building strong community networks of volunteers.
What Can MRC Volunteers Do?

**Support** local public health, while advancing the priorities of the U.S. Surgeon General:

- Promoting disease prevention
- Improving Health literacy
- Eliminating health disparities
- Enhancing public health preparedness

**Assist** local hospitals, health departments and community response partners with surge personnel needs

**Participate** in emergency preparedness trainings, exercises and drills through local MRC unit.
How Can the MRC Benefit your local community or organization?

- Strengthens public health & emergency response infrastructure by providing supplemental personnel (surge needs)
- Enables communities to meet specific health needs (mass vaccination clinics)
- Gives community members the opportunity to participate in developing strategies to make their communities healthier and safer
- Provides mechanism for information sharing and coordination between all partner organizations.
How can I become involved with my local MRC?

- Become a MRC volunteer and encourage your members to do so also
- Contact your local health department or MRC unit to register
- Refer to the tool kit provided today
- Visit [www.medicalreservecorps.gov](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov) for more information.
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