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# City of Bethlehem MRC

VOLUNTEERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY'S HEALTH

## *A Message from the City of Bethlehem MRC Coordinator*



Dear MRC Volunteers,

This is my first chance to communicate with many of you. I have been with the Bethlehem Health Bureau for the last year and I will be taking on a larger role with the MRC. The City of Bethlehem MRC has 171 members that include a range of skills. The mix includes Physicians, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Nurses and Pharmacists. Other health care professionals involved are Dentists, Veterinarians, EMS Personnel, and Public Health Professionals. We also have others that are not employees in healthcare directly but provide valuable skills.

In a public health emergency there are many skill sets that get called into play. Aside from those providing direct care there is always a demand for communication, organization, and identification of needs. Having a diverse group means we will more robustly be able to answer the need when the call comes.

Integration of all emergency response functions seems like an obvious idea. But making that idea a reality is no easy task. First these public functions evolved apart from each other. Over the years each discipline became quite sophisticated. It took the September 11th disaster to point out the need for us all to work together, to know what to expect from each other. We even had to learn to, quite literally communicate on the same frequency. We are making great progress in making this happen and it is in large part due to volunteers like you that allows this to happen.

I look forward to working with all of you in the future.

## GET TO KNOW THE MRC STAFF



**Fallon Maggio has been employed with the Bethlehem Health Bureau for five years working as a Community Health Specialist in the Public Health Preparedness Division. Her job duties include organizing monthly trainings for health bureau staff, Lyme disease and Influenza investigations, preparedness education and outreach, and animal bite investigations. She is very excited to work with our volunteers and take a more active role in the City of Bethlehem MRC.**



# TICKS AND DISEASE

*Written by: Dr. Basil Dolphin*

There are few things on Earth as loathsome as a tick. They spend their life either feeding or waiting to feed on the blood of others. They do have one other activity; reproducing. To make matters far worse, ticks are vectors capable of spreading many diseases. For our area, the list of afflictions transmitted by ticks is quite long and includes Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (actually much more common in the east than in the mountains of the west), Babesiosis, Erlichiosis, STARI and most well known in this area-Lyme Disease. There are other tick-borne diseases (see [www.cdc.gov/ticks/diseases/](http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/diseases/)) and worldwide the list is long.

It is wise that we take measures to prevent falling victim to this tiny vampire. As we break free of winter and increase our outdoor activities, there are disease carrying ticks all around us. Many people have played unsuspecting host to these creatures while cutting grass in their back yard, so being aware of the problem is most important.

As with any intervention in public health, primary prevention is our most important tool. Once aware of the problem, we can take steps to interrupt the chain of infection:

1. Dress appropriately- Long sleeves on pants and shirts will provide less skin surface. It is also helpful to tuck your pants legs in to your socks and wear light colored clothing to allow the ticks to stand out and be removed before they “dig in.”
2. Use insect repellent-DEET is the most effective and 30% is the optimal strength, but some people like to use less harsh chemicals. When trying to decide the best course of repellent, you may wish to let the risk of being bitten decide your choice of agent. If you want the protection of DEET with less exposure, you may try applying it your clothes instead of your skin.
3. Do a tick check when you are done for the day. Ticks like skin folds, so be sure to do a thorough examination. One good thing is that it takes a tick to feed for 24-48 hours before it is able to transmit Lyme Disease.
4. When a tick is found, it should be removed by grasping it with tweezers as close to the skin as possible. **DO NOT YANK THE TICK OUT.** By doing so, mouth parts may be left in the skin and could cause a nasty foreign body reaction. Use firm and steady traction and after a minute or so the tick will be out. It will usually have a bit of skin in its “teeth.”
5. Clean the area with disinfectant.

Trying to crush or burn the tick could be harmful by causing the tick to disgorge the Lyme spirochete into your body. Other methods such as using petroleum jelly to smother the tick take a while and may give extra time and allow transmission to occur.

So get out there and enjoy the beautiful weather after a long and tough winter, but remember to take precautions to ensure that the little blood sucker out there will not make you one of their prey.

**CITY OF  
BETHLEHEM MRC  
VOLUNTEER  
COUNT- 171 Total**

Physicians	18
Nurses	91
Pharmacists	11
Dentists	3
Physician Assistants	4
Veterinarians	1
EMS Professionals	6
Mental Health Professionals	9
Other Public Health/ Medical	20
Non-Public Health/ Medical	8

## REMINDER:

**Please remember to update your contact information and professional licenses in the ServPA System.**

**Please also notify Mel Lopez of changes to your contact information (her contact information is at the end of this newsletter)**



City of Bethlehem MRC

# Meetings and Volunteer Opportunities

## MRC Meeting for 2011

- Details for the all-volunteer meetings will be sent out at a later date

Orientation:	Wednesday, March 30 <sup>th</sup> Bethlehem City Hall	5:30pm-7:00pm
1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting: <i>(all volunteers)</i>	Wednesday, April 27 <sup>th</sup> Lehigh Valley Hospital- Muhlenberg	5:30pm-7:30pm
2 <sup>nd</sup> Meeting: <i>(all volunteers)</i>	Wednesday, November 9 <sup>th</sup> Lehigh Valley Hospital- Muhlenberg	5:30pm-7:30pm

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Healthy Kids Day

Emergency Preparedness Education

Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup>

12:00pm-3:00pm

Bethlehem YMCA

1-2 volunteers needed

Contact Fallon Maggio [fmaggio@bethlehem-pa.gov](mailto:fmaggio@bethlehem-pa.gov) by March 28<sup>th</sup>



### Animal Food Bank of the LV Pet Day

Animal Bite Prevention Education

Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>

10:00am-2:00pm

NCC Fowler Family Southside Reading Room

2 volunteers needed

Contact Fallon Maggio [fmaggio@bethlehem-pa.gov](mailto:fmaggio@bethlehem-pa.gov) by April 4<sup>th</sup>



### **Has your contact information changed?**

Name, address, phone (home, cell, work),  
e-mail, or Emergency Contact Person...etc.

**If so, please contact Mel Lopez at (610) 997-7907  
or email [mlopez@bethlehem-pa.gov](mailto:mlopez@bethlehem-pa.gov)**