

City of Bethlehem Medical Reserve Corps Newsletter

Volume 2,
Issue 1

Summer 2009
Edition

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

BASD POD	1
ICS 100 and NIMS 700	1
SERVPA Integration	2
Maternity Leave	2
Call Center drill	2
H1N1 Update	3
Contact Info. Changes	4

Heros At Home

BASD POD DRILL

On April 25th the City of Bethlehem MRC, Bethlehem Health Bureau, and the Bethlehem Area School District collaborated to hold a POD Drill at North East Middle School. The POD Drill served a dual purpose as it vaccinated BASD students against Chickenpox, Meningitis, and Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis while allowing us to practice our job roles, POD set up, and evaluate existing needs and procedures. The participants of the POD Drill dispensed 216 vaccinations to 125 students preparing our children for the upcoming school year.

The POD drill also afforded us the ability to survey participants and workers to get a greater understanding of our future needs. It became clear that increase need for signage, entry directions, and more staff in particular areas would add to our success of running an efficient POD clinic.

We have received a great amount of feedback from our participants and plan on using this evaluation data to purchase additional equipment. The MRC applied for a grant through the PA State Hospital Preparedness Program that allowed us to purchase some equipment and sup-

plies to run the initial POD. In addition a small amount of grant funds will be awarded to purchase some additional equipment needs as identified by our evaluation.

It is our hope that we will be able to continue practicing our POD procedures annually with your help. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our volunteers who contributed to this effort as it would have not been possible without you. You have all done a wonderful job and it has not gone unnoticed!

ICS-100/ NIMS 700 Training Class

On Monday June 29th and Wednesday July 1st, 2009 the Northampton County Emergency Management will be hosting a **FREE ICS-100/NIMS 700 dual course** from 5:30-9:30pm. To get full credit for the courses you

must attend both classes. We currently can accept up to 20 participants and openings are still available. If you are interested in attending please contact mlopez@bethlehem-pa.gov. The course will be held at the Northampton County

Emergency Operations Center at 100 Gracedale Avenue Nazareth, PA 18064. For more information on directions visit www.nc911.org. Please take advantage of this FREE opportunity.

SERVPA Integration

On May 15, 2009 the City of Bethlehem MRC has officially started the process of integrating our volunteer database with the PA state volunteer registry system (SERVPA). Our unit is working with the database creators, Collaborative Fusion, in an attempt to upload existing data that would allow our volunteers to do partial registry in the SERVPA. This would reduce the amount of work volunteers would need to do to register in the system, and allow for a more seamless transition. It is the goal of the City of Bethlehem MRC to have all of our volunteers registered in this system as it has greater functionality for data management and volunteer

communications. We have had a good number of our volunteers already register which will make this process even easier. So a special thank you to all of those volunteers who already completed this process. For those of you who did not register you will be receiving an e-mail notification once your data has been integrated into this system. This notification will come for me and all of you information is protected in this system. It is important to reiterate that just because you are registered in SERVPA

**SERVPA
IS COMING
OUR WAY!**

this does NOT mean you have to volunteer for anything other than the City of Bethlehem MRC. However, you do have the option of becoming a state volunteer if you so choose to do so. This registry system has some wonderful attributes. I hope that through this integrative process we can take full advantage of this system's capabilities to make our MRC stronger and more efficient.

If you would like to register yourself in SERVPA please visit:<https://www.servpa.state.pa.us/> And click on "Register Now" on the left side of the screen.

Maternity Leave

As many of you already know I will be out on maternity leave starting sometime in early August through the end of October-beginning of November. During My Absence Julie Zumas and Mel Lopez will be handling all of the operations of the Medical Reserve Corps. It is my hope that all of our volunteers will pitch in to help keep things running smoothly and maintain continued

**I will on leave
sometime in
early August
until October
2009**

interest. I have formulated a subcommittee chart with all of the volunteers who have express interest in those particular areas and would like subcommittee members to work on some specific tasks while I am away. An e-mail will be sent out to all of our volunteers with this subcommittee information. You can choose to join a subcommittee or remove yourself from the list by contacting mlopez@bethlehem-pa.gov. I encourage subcommittees to work either

face to face if possible or via e-mail. I can assist you with setting up meeting space and agenda information. In addition Julie Zumas and Mel Lopez are also available for any type of assistance you may need. You can contact Julie Zumas at : jzumas@bethlehem-pa.gov or by calling 610-865-7083 Mel Lopez can be reached at mlopez@bethlehem-pa.gov Or 610-865-7083 Thank you for your patience and

Call Center Drill Date Set

The Northampton County Call Center has undergone a continuous improvement process to streamline the standard operating procedures and to develop necessary forms and protocol. On October 6, 2009 we have a "Save the Date" for our call center operational drill. It is unclear

if we will need volunteers to staff our first drill, however we will need your assistance to call in and act as concerned citizens. Please consider participating in this effort and mark your calendars. Myself, or Julie Zumas will be e-mailing all of you with more details as they become

available. With the advent of the novel H1N1 virus is imperative that we get our call center functional to handle phone calls, questions, and concerns during our upcoming flu season. Outbreaks and disasters are not planned events. This is exactly why we need to be prepared for anything!

H1N1 Update

One June 11, 2009 the World health organization raised the worldwide pandemic alert level to 6, which indicates a global pandemic is underway. We have experienced three pandemics in the last century (1918, 1957, and 1968-69) that have varied greatly in their severity and longevity. The current pandemic has proven to be as serious as our seasonal flu, but because it is a novel strain it could have the potential to become more severe and widespread. The H1N1 is a new virus and we still have a lot to learn about this strains epidemiological characteristics , severity, and potential for mutation.

As of June 2009 we have seen 40 confirmed cases in the City of Bethlehem, 1 probable, and 24 cases of interest. The Sate of Pennsylvania has reported 1,024 total confirmed cases with 3 reported deaths. At this point in time most of the people who have become ill with the H1N1 virus have not become seriously ill and have recovered without hospitalization. The current recommended treatment of H1N1 remains to be Oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) and Zanamivir (Relenza®). This treatment works best when started within 2 days after onset, but treatment with antiviral drugs should be considered after 48 hours, particularly for hospitalized patients or people at high risk for influenza-related complications. At this point antiviral will not be distributed as a means of prophylaxis and should be reserved for those who are severely ill.

Whether you are tested and actually diagnosed with the novel H1N1 is less important than what you do if you become sick. If you are ill it is strongly encouraged that you stay home and avoid community setting such as churches, graduations, par-

ties, malls etc. Those who have influenza like illness should self isolate for seven days after onset of symptoms or until you have been symptom free for 24 hours. Simple control measure such as social distancing , covering your cough, and hand washing are critical to reducing the spread of this virus. You all have a role in protecting your family and yourself. If you currently work in a healthcare or institutional setting please educate those around you about good hand washing and hygiene. We can all help by supporting infection control measures in our community and work-place.

Currently the CDC does not recommend against any travel to any country. The CDC will continue to monitor the situation around the world and will provide recommendations to U.S. travelers based on the changing situation. If you are planning to travel you can check the CDC traveler's health website at www.cdc.gov/health . For the latest updates on entry or exit screening procedures

The current case definition for the H1N1 posted by the CDC is as follows:

A **confirmed case** of novel influenza A (H1N1) virus infection is defined as a person with an influenza-like illness with laboratory confirmed novel influenza A (H1N1) virus infection by one or more of the following tests:

1. real-time RT-PCR
2. viral culture

A **probable case** of novel influenza A (H1N1) virus infection is defined as a person with an influenza-like-illness who is positive for influenza A, but negative for human H1 and H3 by influenza RT-PCR.

Symptoms of H1N1 include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of peo-

ple who have been infected with this new H1N1 virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

If you are experiencing these symptoms or know someone who is they should contact their primary care physician and not the emergency room unless they are experiencing severe symptoms.

It is important to note that state public laboratory will only test specimens that are positive by a screening rapid test for virus confirmation in certain situations. such as:

- In cases of severe illness requiring hospitalization or resulting in death
- In institutional settings where confirmation will aid clinical and public health decision making (e.g. summer camps, correctional facilities, group home settings, long term care facilities)
- In cases involving health care workers
- In age groups that have had a low incidence of disease (infants <1 year of age and persons >65 years of age)
- All specimens from the influenza sentinel physician network

It is the goal of the CDC, PADOH, and the Bethlehem Health Bureau to reduce transmission and illness severity, provide information to assist health care providers, public officials, MRC volunteers, and the community at large. Because we may continue to see this virus circulate during our regular flu season the government is taking aggressive steps in the vaccine manufacturing process. Vaccines could prove to be powerful tool in containing and reducing the transmission of this disease. Consequently, current reports on the vaccine have indicated that it may be distributed in two doses, and will be separate from the current flu vaccine.



medical
reserve
corps

City of Bethlehem MRC
10 East Church Street
Bethlehem, pa 18018

Phone: 610-865-7087
Fax: 610-865-7326
E-mail:
kberk@bethlehem-pa.gov

**COBMRC - Bethlehem
Health Bureau**

Heroes at Home

[http://www.bethlehem-pa.gov/health/
emergency/volunteer.htm](http://www.bethlehem-pa.gov/health/emergency/volunteer.htm)



From a public health standpoint this may complicate the methods of distribution and the willingness of the community to receive the vaccine. I will continue to keep our unit updated on vaccine information as it become available to us in the next few months.

In the meantime please continue to spread the word of prevention. Encourage family, friends, coworkers, and clients to :

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and them immediately throw the tissue away. If you do not have a tissue cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water , especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth.

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people, and use appropriate personal protective equipment when necessary.
- If you are sick STAY HOME.
- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds, and other social distancing measures.
- If you don't have one yet, consider developing a family emergency plan.

For more information please visit:

CDC– www.CDC.gov

WHO– www.who.int

PADOH-

www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/

OUR MISSION: The City of Bethlehem Medical Reserve Corps is dedicated to organizing and preparing a medically related volunteer base that will serve to assist with emergency services, public health practice, and community outreach and education.

It is through this mission that the City of Bethlehem MRC will assist and collaborate with existing community and public health agencies to effectively use our vital community and medical resources in response to a major natural or man-made disaster.

Reminder to Update Your Volunteer Information

Has your contact information changed?

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

If so, please contact Kelly Berk at 610-997-7905 or e-mail to kberk@bethlehem-pa.gov