

## SMVP Reaches 700 Volunteers

On March 16, the State Managed Volunteer Pool (SMVP) reached an unprecedented milestone. Annie Tran, a 23-year-old pharmacy student at Pacific University in Hillsboro, became the registry's 700th volunteer.



She joins SMVP volunteers currently residing in 31 of Oregon's 36 counties, including registered nurses, physicians, acupuncturists, dentists, massage therapists, paramedics, chiropractors, and many others ready and willing to be activated in the event of a Governor-declared emergency or state-sanctioned exercise.

"I want to help out the community. I've done a lot of service before – immunizations and all those activities – and this is the perfect opportunity to continue do so in the local community," said Tran. "I also want to help out in emergency situations. Before, I've only donated money. I didn't know that I could actually do other things."

Indeed, nearing her May 2013 graduation, the pharmacy student has a lot to offer in emergency situations. To show its appreciation for her service, SERV-OR had a few things to offer as well.

To commemorate her as the 700th volunteer, Tran was awarded an emergency blanket, flashlight, and preparedness booklets. Upon discovering that she was number 700, Tran said that she was in "awe."

"I never win things. Even though it's small, it's an accomplishment for me," she said with a laugh.

Officially launched in 2008 as a part of the Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) – a federal program created after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and designed to establish standards for using medical volunteers during disasters – the SMVP has witnessed an exponential growth during its brief existence. In its first year, there were a mere 12 volunteers. Since then, 688 have been added.

"The 700th volunteer is an exciting milestone that is a testament to the Oregon Health Authority's commitment and efforts to market, recruit, train, and build a strong emergency volunteer program to protect all Oregonians," said Akiko Berkman, Oregon's State MRC Coordinator and ESAR-VHP Project Officer. "Having as many licensed health providers that are registered, pre-credentialed, and pre-trained will only increase our ability to respond and to save lives."

With that said, the SMVP's well on its way towards 800.

## Wasco County Welcomes MRC Unit

The defining geologic features of the Mid-Columbia region – Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge – provide the six-county spread with one of the most beautiful landscapes in the state of Oregon, and perhaps, the Pacific Northwest.

The very same natural splendors, however, pose threats to the safety of the area's residents. Comprised of Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Morrow and Umatilla counties, the Mid-Columbia region is susceptible to a variety of hazards – windstorms, winter storms, landslides, and even a volcanic eruption – that are unlikely to occur elsewhere in the state.

On December 8, 2011, the region took a significant step towards safeguarding its population against the unpredictable – it announced the formation of a Wasco County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) unit.

"With the closest unit being in Clackamas County – more than an hour away – we really saw an opportunity to form an MRC unit here," said Frances Nicholas, Wasco County MRC Coordinator. "[One] that's specifically targeted at the unique hazards and the unique vulnerabilities that Wasco County and the surrounding area have."

Joined by 14 others already in the state of Oregon, the new unit greatly expands the MRC's reach. Previously unaided areas now have the support of locally-based medical and public health volunteers dedicated to strengthening the emergency response, safety, and resiliency of their communities.

Officially housed in The Dalles' North Central Public Health District, the unit is being developed to serve not only Wasco County, but the greater Mid-Columbia region as well.

"We're recruiting basically anybody [in the region] who wants to join, we accept medical professionals and people who aren't licensed," said Nicholas. "I'm mostly focused on creating as much awareness about the MRC unit as possible, especially while it's new and newly forming. People might not really know what it is, or know it's something that they should join."

Though still in its infancy, the Wasco County MRC unit has already attracted much interest.

"We're up to 30 [volunteers] now," said Nicholas.

One of those volunteers is Connie Jubitz, a registered nurse at the Mid-Columbia Medical Center, and a 16-year Wasco County resident.

"If there's an emergency, I'm willing to help out," said Jubitz. "And it seems like [the MRC offers] the message and the framework that would support that kind of volunteering opportunity."

In fact, Jubitz has already had such an opportunity.

On February 4, in partnership with MRC, the American Red Cross sponsored a Go Red for Women's Heart Health event in The Dalles' Civic Auditorium. As an MRC volunteer, Jubitz was able to check blood pressures for a number of attendees.

Since then, a volunteer orientation and Basic Disaster Life Support training have taken place, and with other events already planned, the young MRC unit certainly seems to have established itself. Please contact Frances Nicholas for further details: [francesn@co.was.co.or.us](mailto:francesn@co.was.co.or.us)



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## January Storms Swell, SERV-OR Readies

On January 19 at 1 p.m., as water levels began to rise in western Oregon, and nearly three hours before Governor Kitzhaber declared a state of emergency for Marion, Coos, Benton, and Lincoln counties, the OHA Public Health Division's Agency Operations Center (AOC) was activated, and confronted with the challenge of mitigating the state's worst flood since 1996.



Within the confines of the AOC (pictured), the Health Security, Preparedness, and Response (HSPR) Incident Management Team monitored the situation as the flood, fueled by heavy rains and melted snow, prompted thousands of residents to evacuate their homes in the mid-Willamette Valley.

To compound the situation's severity, in northern Oregon, high elevations experienced heavy snowfall and ice storms, and winds in excess of 100 mph knocked down trees and power lines in Columbia and Hood River counties.

In response to the statewide storm, at 5:00 p.m., SERV-OR issued a standby alert to all 651 SMVP volunteers and system administrators, notifying them of the AOC activation and Governor-declared emergency. Volunteers were asked to confirm receipt of the message. Within 24 hours, 418 had acknowledged – a response rate of 64 percent.

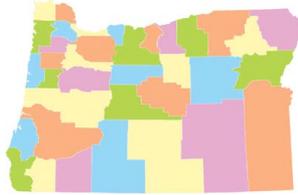
While no volunteers were officially activated, the storm provided a valuable opportunity to assess response numbers for future emergencies.

The status of the SMVP and local MRC units was reported to the AOC, the state's Emergency Communications Center, and included in the situational status reports shared with the Governor's office.

Statewide, more than 400 homes were damaged by the storm. A total of nine counties were affected – Marion, Benton, Lincoln, Lane, Linn, Polk, Coos, Hood River, and Columbia – totaling an estimated \$38 million in damage.

# MRC Unit Updates

**Coos County:** The MRC unit is in the middle of its second recruiting campaign. Already, 22 potential volunteers have shown interest in joining. Two orientations took place in February, and the unit had its first meeting in March. A START Triage training will be held in April.



**Washington County:** MRC volunteers helped public schools with the Immunizations Program Exclusion Process, totaling approximately 115 hours of service. Five new volunteers were welcomed and an orientation was held in January for 17 members. With the benefit of UASI (Urban Areas Security Initiative) funds, the county purchased first-aid supplies and an AED to be used in support of a potential deployment. Christopher Goodwin, Washington County MRC Coordinator, also used his EMT expertise to create a list of some of the most essential items for a volunteer to use in emergency response, and these items were placed into 25 Back-T-Packs.

**Clackamas County:** The MRC has been continuing to gain capacity and has recruited six new members in the last few months, including a new and burgeoning population of Respiratory Therapists. Four MRC RN's had the opportunity to perform QuantiFERON blood draws at a 60-patient tuberculosis exposure worksite clinic. This was a new type of allowance for the MRC unit, and the first outbreak response that they've participated in. An MRC orientation also took place on March 26.

**Yamhill County:** The MRC unit held its very first orientation on February 13, and two new members were added to an already impressive group of volunteers. The orientation handbook was completely revised and updated for future volunteers as well.

**Columbia County:** Between October 7 and December 9, 2011, nine MRC volunteers were busy providing 148 seasonal flu vaccinations, 19 blood pressure screenings, and assisted with K-6 health screenings (hearing, vision, and measuring height and weight) for 1,224 students. They donated a total of 114.25 hours of service at a rate of \$26.18 per hour for a total value of \$2,991.07.

**Wasco County:** A data report for the three counties served by NCPHD is being developed to be placed on the website and shared with community partners. The unit's volunteer recruitment and trainings are currently being prioritized. A volunteer orientation took place on March 5, as well as BDLS training on March 31.

**Deschutes County:** On January 29, the very first Project Mobile Connect, a smaller, more localized version of Project Connect (PC) – a program that offers free services to people who are homeless or in need – was held at Bend's Community Center. An estimated 350 guests showed up to receive various services including medical, dental, meals, mental health, ID, birth certificates, free clothing, first aid supplies and more.

## Senate Bill 563 Completes Public Hearing Process

On February 16, before permanently adopting and amending the administrative rules associated with Senate Bill 563 – the unanimously passed 2011 legislation designed to expand the available pool of emergency responders to previously licensed healthcare professionals – OHA's Public Health Division held a Rulemaking Hearing at the Portland State Office Building. The hearing was an opportunity for any member of the public to comment on the proposed rules.



The rules themselves address the registration, training, background check process, activation and extended liability coverage, and workers' compensation protection offered to qualified emergency service volunteers. They outline a more programmatic structure and streamlined process to strengthen the registration of volunteers, now including those previously licensed in the state of Oregon within the last 10 years.

Some specifics of the more significant rules include:

- Background checks will be completed every five years for registered volunteers.
- The Public Health Division may direct willing registrants to other states where emergency healthcare services are required.
- Every three years, registered volunteers must complete the following trainings:
  - First Aid (CPR & AED)
  - Basic Disaster Life Support
  - Triage
  - Psychological First Aid

The Rulemaking Hearing was attended by a robust zero members of the public (pictured), and February 22 marked the last day to submit written comments to the Rules Coordinator, Brittany Sande. Though Senate Bill 563 became an effective law on January 1, 2012, the public hearing process had to be finalized. Previously licensed healthcare providers may now be officially registered by SERV-OR.

## MRC Planning Retreat Sets Framework For Future

On January 25, 14 Oregon HRC/MRC partners gathered at the McMenamins Kennedy School Library for a full-day Regional Strategic Planning Retreat. Zumana Rios, Community Emergency Planner for the Health Preparedness Program – Region 1, facilitated the meeting designed to determine MRC activities for the remainder of the year, and into the first half of next. One of the more significant topics covered was determining the primary objectives for the spring 2013 Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) joint exercise.



UASI allocates funds to enhance regional preparedness in major metropolitan areas throughout the United States. The funds address the unique planning, organization, equipment, training, and exercise needs of high-threat, high-density areas, and are meant to assist participants in their creation of regional systems for prevention, protection, response, and recovery. The Oregon HRC/MRC is one of those participants.

John Reid, Cities Readiness Initiative consultant, made a brief appearance to further discuss UASI with the HRC/MRC stakeholders. The group agreed that testing county-to-county aid should be the focal point of the upcoming joint exercise, as well as broadening MRC volunteers' roles and knowledge, and developing an After Action Report.

Other regional strategic discussions revolved around the rotation of facilitator duties, developing a SERV-OR resource guide, the inclusion of Naturopaths as volunteers, logistics for the May 19 Regional Training Event, creating a poster abstract for the National Integrated Training Summit, newsletter deadlines, and applying for a two-year Public Health Associate.

## May 19 Marks Regional MRC Training Day

The regional MRC Training Day this year will be an all-day event held on Saturday, May 19, in Washington County, at 102 S.W. Washington St., Hillsboro, 97123.



This year's event will feature many of the core trainings required for MRC membership and other new and exciting training opportunities. A final list of trainings and an official invitation will be available at a later date.

The Hillsboro facility is located under the multi-level parking structure, located between First Avenue and Adams Avenue. Parking is free, and the location is just one block from the end of the MAX line at Hatfield station.

Please mark your calendars for May 19 and keep an eye on your inboxes for the training list and invitation, and we look forward to seeing you there and thank you for your MRC membership and service.

## SERV-OR Now Recruiting Massage Therapists

SERV-OR is pleased to announce the recruitment of massage therapists in its ongoing effort to help better protect the health and safety of Oregonians during large-scale disasters.



Massage therapists' skills, specifically in treating painful ailments, decompressing tired and overworked muscles, and reducing stress, are a valuable asset in any emergency. As a volunteer, you'll gain personal satisfaction, a chance to make a difference in your community, and the knowledge that you're part of an effective, official response system.

After registering with SERV-OR, you'll agree to be contacted in the event of an emergency or future training opportunities. Once notified, you are free to decide whether or not to participate.

Considerations should include: family needs, professional commitments, the nature and length of the event, and your own state of health, among others. Registration does not obligate you to respond during any given emergency.

To register, or to learn more about the statewide database that manages, credentials, and alerts volunteer health providers, please visit: [public.health.oregon.gov/Preparedness/Prepare/SERV-OR/Pages/index.aspx](http://public.health.oregon.gov/Preparedness/Prepare/SERV-OR/Pages/index.aspx).

## MRC Celebrates 10 Years of National Service

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the creation of the Medical Reserve Corps, a program first announced during President George W. Bush's 2002 State of the Union address, and officially launched as a demonstration project in July of 2002.



Over the past ten years, the MRC has grown to more than 200,000 volunteers in almost 1,000 units across the country – all working to build resiliency in thousands of local communities by means of prevention, preparedness, and public health activities.

To commemorate this impressive achievement, you're encouraged to use the new 10th anniversary MRC logo throughout the year – on your website, email signature lines, and in printed materials.

To access the logos, first log in to the [MRC Member Resources site](#). Next, select the Logo Request/New Use option. Complete the brief form that follows, then select and download the logo file(s) directly from the next page.

As with the traditional MRC logo, please review the guidelines associated with the use of the MRC logo [here](#).

## Nehalem Bay MRC Students Master Psychological First Aid

On January 28, the Nehalem Bay Medical Reserve Corps hosted a psychological first aid training at Fire Station 13 in Nehalem. Members from CERT, the EVC board, Red Cross, as well as nurses, physician assistants and other community members joined together to learn and role-play under the tutelage of Judy Olivier, Behavioral Health Disaster Planner, and part-time Manzanita resident.



The focus of the course was teaching the necessary skills to provide psychological first aid – helping people with their basic needs, making sure they are functioning adequately, and helping them develop a plan of action to take the first steps to recovery following an emotionally traumatic event.

Participants practiced interviewing with a partner using the acronym PFA which stands for Physically Ok, Functioning and Ready to Act; the three questions you should ask when you're performing a psychological first aid intervention.

Olivier received rave reviews from her audience and is excited to become more involved in the emergency preparedness community in the Nehalem area. Rest assured, for those that missed this training opportunity, Olivier will be teaching more courses in the future, ranging from the psychological first aid portion of the CERT curriculum to a psychological first aid II course.

(Pictured: Paul Steele and Liela Salmon)

Special thanks to Elise Englert, Nehalem Bay MRC Coordinator, for contributing this content.

## Service By The Numbers

The AmeriCorps\*VISTA MRC/Accreditation team (including Project Connect and vulnerable populations VISTAs) has recently surpassed the halfway point of its year of service. Since August, the following numbers have been accumulated:



**383** volunteers recruited

**746** volunteers supported

**2,187** volunteer hours contributed

**\$46,725** estimated value of contributed volunteer hours

**112** new host site partnerships forged

**262** materials created

**31** media exposures

**\$19,780** raised by grants

**\$7,665** in-kind donations received

**2,114** hours spent on training activities

**15,924** VISTA hours

**\$340,136** estimated value of VISTA hours