

THE PULSE

Official Newsletter of the Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps

SUMMER 2017



**MARYLAND
RESPONDS**
MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

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The Pulse is brought to you by the Maryland Office of Preparedness and Response, Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps State Program.

KEEPING SAFE IN HOT WEATHER

Contributed by: Carin Morrell, Public Information Officer

Temperatures in Maryland have already soared into the 90's as summer gets underway. As the temperatures climb, so do the dangers of heat-related illness. To avoid heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke, follow these quick tips:

Drink plenty of water: Preventing dehydration is important on a hot day. Don't wait until you're thirsty. Drink two to four glasses (16-32 ounces) every hour. Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and overly sweetened drinks.

Wear loose clothes: Lightweight, light-colored clothes can help keep you cool. Also consider a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses to help shade you from the sun and its harmful UV rays.

Keep cool inside: When possible, stay inside in the air-conditioning. If your home does not have air conditioning, consider visiting a shopping mall, public library, or stay with family and friends. On especially hot days, your local health department will have information about cooling shelters in your area.

Take it easy: Athletes and those who work outdoors should take frequent breaks. Try to schedule physical activity during the morning or evening when it is cooler.

NEVER leave children or pets inside the car!

You never think it will happen to you, but an average of 37 children die every year inside a hot car, according to safety organization [Kids and Cars](#). This includes children accidentally locking themselves in a car or trunk, children being forgotten inside a car or, in rare cases, children being intentionally left inside a car.

Even if you need to run a quick errand inside, a car can heat up very quickly, putting your child or pet at serious risk.

The Office of Preparedness and Response developed a short video with eight quick tips to keep your child safe and prevent hot car deaths. Please watch and share with your family and friends. <https://youtu.be/1NiliGMIVlg>.

For more heat-related illness information and tips, visit <http://bit.ly/MDheatFAQ>



PREPARE NOW FOR THE 2017 HURRICANE SEASON

Contributed by: Amanda Driesse, CDC Preparedness Field Assignee

The 2017 Atlantic hurricane season began on June 1 and will continue to November 30. As the season begins, now is the time to prepare. All Maryland Responders are strongly encouraged to take the time to prepare their families and homes for hurricanes and their related impact. Here is what you can do to get ready:

Know your Risk: Hurricanes are not just a coastal problem. Every part of Maryland can experience the devastating impact of hurricanes. High winds, heavy rainfall, tornadoes, and flooding can be felt hundreds of miles inland, potentially causing loss of life and catastrophic damage to property.

Get Prepared: As the storm approaches, it is often too late to get ready. To prepare, make sure you:

- Know Your Zone: Evacuations are more common than people realize. Make yourself familiar with your community's evacuation zones so you'll know exactly where to go.
- Build a Kit: If a hurricane hits your community, you may not have access to water, food, and other items for some time. Think about your family's needs and create an emergency supply kit that contains essential items to take care of family members and pets for at least three days. For a list of items to consider, visit: <http://bit.ly/EmSupplyKit>.
- Complete a Family Communication Plan: Plan how you will assemble your family and loved ones and anticipate where you will go during different situations. Get together with your family and agree on meeting locations and ways to contact one another in an emergency. Complete an emergency contact card for each member of your family to keep with them: <http://1.usa.gov/1Ryq3Wf>.
- Check Your Insurance Coverage: Not all hurricane-related losses are covered under traditional policies. Most homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage or losses from flooding. Review your policy, ensure you're adequately covered, and contact your agent for any changes.

Stay Informed: Know where to look for trusted sources of information during a hurricane event.

- Download the free Maryland Prepares mobile app, which includes weather and emergency alerts, at bit.ly/MDPreparesApp.
- Know the difference between a watch and a warning.
 - Hurricane watch = hurricane conditions are possible within the next 48 hrs. During this time, you should review your evacuation plan and stay tuned to local radio or TV stations for instructions from local officials.
 - Hurricane warning = hurricane conditions are expected within 36 hrs. This means a hurricane is coming; take action! Gather emergency supplies and evacuate if told to do so or get to a safe spot and shelter in place.
- Monitor local news for hurricane watches and warnings in your area and follow directions from local officials.
- Make sure you have a battery-operated or hand-crank radio available so you can stay updated if the power goes out.

After a Hurricane:

- If you have to evacuate, return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.
- Avoid walking or driving through flood waters. Just six inches of moving water can knock you down and fast-moving water can sweep your vehicle away.
- Avoid flood water as it may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines and may hide dangerous debris or places where the ground is washed away.
- Photograph the damage to your property to assist in filing an insurance claim.
- Check around your home for containers

PREPARE NOW FOR THE 2017 HURRICANE SEASON CTD.

and other areas where rain water may have collected. Dump and scrub containers to prevent mosquito breeding. Consider using mosquito dunks on larger areas of standing water to prevent mosquito larvae from maturing into biting adults.

Hurricanes are one of nature's most powerful and destructive natural disasters. It only takes one to change your life. Prepare your family now.

Additional Sources and Resources:

- Maryland Office of Preparedness & Response: <http://preparedness.health.maryland.gov>
- Maryland Emergency Management Agency: <http://memama.maryland.gov>
- Ready.gov: <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>



OPIOID CRISIS AND RESPONSE IN MARYLAND

Contributed by: Carin Morrell, Public Information Officer

On March 1, 2017, Governor Larry Hogan declared a State of Emergency in response to the heroin and opioid crisis in Maryland. In 2016, opioid overdose was the fourth leading cause of death in Maryland, after only heart disease, cancer, and stroke. Six people die from an opioid overdose every day in Maryland.

What is an opioid? An opioid is a drug that acts on the nervous system to relieve pain. Prescription painkillers including OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin, and Codeine are all opioids. Other opioids include heroin, fentanyl, carfentanil, and morphine.

Who is affected? Residents of all ages, races, genders, and areas across the state are affected by heroin and opioid misuse. Although intoxication deaths have been increasing among all age groups, the increase has been most rapid among individuals 55 years of age and above. The number of deaths among this age group increased five-fold between 2010 and 2016, from 86 to 424.

How can I help? There are many ways to do your part to help combat the opioid crisis in Maryland.

- Remove any extra and unneeded prescriptions from your home. All Maryland State

Police barracks are 24/7 drop-off locations, or you can visit bit.ly/rxdropoff for a full list.

- Learn how to use naloxone (Narcan spray) and carry it with you. Naloxone is a prescription that safely and effectively reverses an opioid overdose. A new law has expanded naloxone access to all Marylanders, making it accessible at any pharmacy. Learn more at bit.ly/naloxoneMD
- If someone is having an overdose, call 911. Maryland's "Good Samaritan" law protects you from arrest, charges, or prosecution if you seek help for someone who is overdosing.
- If you are struggling with substance use disorder, call the **crisis hotline** at **1-800-422-0009**.

You can learn more about the opioid crisis, what Maryland is doing, and what you can do by visiting BeforeItsTooLate.org



ZIKA VIRUS AWARENESS AND MOSQUITO BORNE DISEASE PREVENTION

Contributed by: Amanda Driesse, CDC Preparedness Field Assignee

As the weather gets warmer, you may have noticed increasing numbers of mosquitoes in and around your home. Different species of mosquitoes transmit diseases such as malaria, West Nile virus, and chikungunya. The ongoing outbreaks of Zika virus in many countries around the world are also primarily caused by mosquitoes. Read on for more information about the Zika virus and ways to prevent mosquito borne diseases.

Zika Virus Fast Facts

- Zika is spread to people:
 - Primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito.
 - Through sexual contact. Person-to-person sexual transmission of Zika has been reported in the United States.
 - From mother to child during pregnancy
 - Through blood transfusions
- Common symptoms include fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes).
- The illness is usually mild, but has been linked to poor pregnancy outcomes including birth defects (e.g. microcephaly) as well as a serious nervous system disorder called Guillain-Barré Syndrome.
- Only travel-related cases (cases related to a returning or visiting traveler to the continental U.S. from another country) have been identified in Maryland at this time.
- Local mosquito borne Zika virus transmission has been reported in areas of Texas and Florida.

Mosquito Borne Disease Prevention

Education for mosquito borne disease prevention continues to be a vital component against Zika spread and promotes the health and safety of all Maryland residents and visitors. Here are some steps you can take to prevent the spread of Zika and other mosquito borne diseases:

- Avoid mosquito bites by wearing protective clothing and by applying an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellent. Find the insect repellent that's right for you by using the Environmental Protection Agency's search tool, <http://bit.ly/2rFbk6J>.
- Protect your home from mosquito invasion by:
 - Eliminating standing water around your home
 - Discarding or routinely emptying potential water holding containers (e.g. buckets, backyard furniture, toys, playsets, etc.)
 - Installing intact window and door screens
 - Using air conditioning
- Know before you go! If you are planning a vacation, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) world map website to see where the risk of Zika is greatest: bit.ly/ZikaRiskCDC.

To learn more about Zika, visit: <http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/pages/zika.aspx>.



Infection during pregnancy can lead to poor pregnancy outcomes including birth defects.

MARYLAND RESPONDS SAYS FAREWELL

Contributed by: Amanda Driesse, CDC Preparedness Field Assignee



On November 29, 2016, Maryland Responds said farewell to our State Administrator, Stephanie Parsons-Freeburger (*pictured on right*). Stephanie dedicated four and a half years to Maryland Responds and is the main reason for the growth and success of the Maryland Responds state program.

Maryland Responds also said goodbye to Hannah Thomas (*pictured on left*), the Maryland Responds Program Specialist on May 26, 2017. Hannah has been hired by the Annapolis Office of Emergency Management as the Training, Exercise, and Community Outreach Coordinator.

We are so thankful for Stephanie and Hannah's dedication to Maryland Responds during their time with the program. We wish them luck in their future endeavors and look forward to keeping them on as Maryland Responders!

ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

Contributed by: Amanda Driesse, CDC Preparedness Field Assignee

In October 2016, the Maryland Responds Advisory Council met for the first time this council term. The Advisory Council is split into three sub-committees: Recruitment, Training and Exercise, and Engagement. Each committee has a Chair and Vice Chair and several members who are responsible for ensuring the goals and objectives of each committee are met. So far this year we have accomplished the following:

The Engagement Committee organized and implemented a call down to Maryland Responds members who have not yet reached Ready Responder status. Approximately 300 calls were made and those members who were reached were guided in the process of completing the steps on their Road to Readiness.

The Recruitment Committee is finalizing the development of a University and College Partnership and Collaboration Plan. This plan outlines the proposed process and objectives for recruitment of new Maryland Responders from universities and colleges. The goal is to use the plan and associated resources as a guide for Maryland Responds to develop partnerships with institutions of higher education.

The Training and Exercise Committee has developed three deployment packing lists to assist responders in preparing for a 1-day, 2-3 day, or a 3-7 day deployment with Maryland Responds. These can be found on the Maryland Responds website at: <http://bit.ly/MDRRResources>.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FIELD

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF PHARMACY CLOSED POINT OF DISPENSING (POD) DRILL

Contributed by: Carin Morrell, Public Information Officer

Maryland Responds has partnered with Pharmacy Schools across Maryland to hold Closed Point of Dispensing (POD) Drills over the past several months. Since November, Maryland Responds held drills at:

- Notre Dame of Maryland's School of Pharmacy
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore School of Pharmacy and Health Professions
- Shady Grove Pharmacy
- University of Maryland School of Pharmacy

Our most recent drill, held on April 5, included dozens of pharmacists exercising the Point of Dispensing (POD) at University of Maryland School of Pharmacy.

A Point of Dispensing (POD) is set up as a way to efficiently and effectively distribute medications to individuals during a widespread outbreak of disease or a release of a bioterrorism agent (ex. Anthrax). During a Point of Dispensing (POD), individuals first fill out a form to determine the type of medication they need and then they receive that medication. Points of Dispensing (PODs) are set up in an assembly line, which allows a steady flow of patients to quickly receive their medication.

The pharmacy students at University of Maryland also received some surprises during their exercise, including a "patient" acting as though they were in need of CPR (*pictured at center right*) and a "patient" who pretended to go into labor. These surprises are intended to show actual scenarios that may happen during a Point of Dispensing (POD) so the students can practice how they might react in a real-world situation.

To see a time-lapse video of the Point of Dispensing (POD) exercise at University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, view the post on our Maryland Responds Facebook Page at <http://bit.ly/2rvjGOh>.



BUILDING PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE, RESPONSE CAPABILITY AND DEVELOPING RESILIENCE IN COMMUNITIES THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION COLLABORATION

*Contributed by: Mary C. Bridenhagen, MPA, BSN, RN - Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) - Maryland Responds Advisory Council
Ronna A. Schrum, DNP, RN, CRNP - Assistant Professor of Nursing, Frostburg State University*

A pilot program was developed with Frostburg State University to incorporate the Road to Readiness for the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) of Maryland Responds within the clinical portion Registered Nurse (RN) to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) curriculum. The Registered Nurses (RN's) could choose to become Ready Responders as part of their clinical requirement.

The pilot began with the Fall of 2016 semester. The class consisted of 76 licensed Registered Nurses (RN's). Ultimately, 32 students (42% of the class) chose to complete the Road to Readiness and are now Ready Responders in the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) - Maryland Responds.

Feedback from the students:

- "It was great to gain insight into the state and federal agencies and how they operate during times of crisis."
- "I am so glad that I became a Ready Responder. I had no idea that this even existed and I cannot wait to volunteer in my community."
- "I learned so much about emergency preparedness!"

This is a great success story of collaboration in developing response capability and resilience within communities throughout Maryland.

RESPONDING TO A RADIOLOGICAL EVENT

Contributed by: Lisa Swank, Harford County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

There is an ever increasing probability that communities will have to respond to a radiological event. The most likely scenario would involve an improvised nuclear device. Sheltering in place is the best course of action if there is no warning prior to the event, as this reduces your exposure to the radiation that has been released. If sheltering in place is not an option, simply running away from the source of the radiation will also lessen your degree of radiation exposure.

The actual occurrence of injuries does not stop when the immediate blast effects have subsided. It is likely that the most effective lifesaving activities will be those that address the evacuation or sheltering-in-place decisions for the potential victims in the immediate fallout path, the effective communication of instructions to the affected population, and the efficient decontamination of the evacuated population.

Our best response tools for radiation events include personal dosimeters and portal monitors. Dosimeters are worn by individuals who are assisting with the response efforts. These devices give you an immediate reading with respect to the amount of radiation you have been exposed to. A portal monitor (looks like a door frame made out of PVC pipe) will allow community responders to monitor large numbers of individuals who believe they have been exposed to radiation following the event. These devices would be found at a local Community Reception Center where Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) members may be asked to assist other community first responders.

Radiation decontamination is a simple process, as compared to biological and chemical decontamination, since there is less risk to response personnel relative to the other types of decontamination procedures.

MARYLAND RESPONDS VOLUNTEER NOTIFICATION EXERCISE TO BE HELD IN AUGUST 2017

Contributed by: Amanda Driesse, CDC Preparedness Field Assignee

A Maryland Responds volunteer notification exercise will be held in August 2017. The purpose of this exercise is to evaluate the use of the Maryland Responds Registry for volunteer notification and activation during a simulated emergency.

During this exercise, you may be contacted by email, phone, and/or internal messaging through the Maryland Responds Registry to participate in this exercise. All exercise communications will start and end with the statement: "THIS IS AN EXERCISE." Communications may include an

emergency scenario. If contacted, you may be asked for your availability for the exercise deployment period. Please respond to the availability request as if the emergency were real. You will NOT be expected to deploy for this exercise.

Your participation in this exercise is vital. This exercise will assist in assessing how many Maryland Responders may be able to deploy in a real-world emergency. So, when you see "THIS IS AN EXERCISE", please respond as instructed to help us ensure we are ready for a real emergency.

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Contributed by: Carin Morrell, Public Information Officer

Are you following Maryland Responds on social media? Connecting with us on social media is a great way to see what we are working on and to discover great preparedness resources!

Find videos, pictures, preparedness tips, and more on our [Facebook](#) page and be sure to "Like" us!

Maryland Responds shares a [Twitter](#) account with the Maryland Office of Preparedness and Response. When you follow this account, you will have access to preparedness resources and tips shared by Maryland Responds and the Office of Preparedness and Response.

Finally, by joining the Maryland Responds [LinkedIn](#) group you will be able to add your experience to your professional profile and connect with other Maryland Responders!

- Facebook: www.facebook.com/MDResponds
- Twitter: [@MarylandOPR](https://twitter.com/MarylandOPR)
- LinkedIn: <http://bit.ly/MDRlinkedin>

Our Maryland Responds website also has lots of great information including what a responder is, how to register and complete your road to readiness, and frequently asked questions. Visit our website at <https://mdr.health.maryland.gov>.

You can also learn more about preparedness and response tips from the [Office of Preparedness and Response Facebook](#) page and from their website, <https://preparedness.health.maryland.gov>.

Follow the Maryland Department of Health on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



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