



**SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:**

- **Cities Readiness Initiative full-scale exercises**
- **FEMA Smartphone App**
- **“Maryland Prepares” Social Media Challenge**
- **MD Responds Backpacks**

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# MD Responds Newsletter

## August 2012

MD RESPONDS NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2012

### DHMH and Local Health Departments Conduct Cities Readiness Initiative Exercise

#### *Medication Distribution strategies in the Baltimore Region tested*

On May 8 and 9, 2012, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s Office of Preparedness and Response (OP&R) conducted an exercise designed to test Maryland’s ability to respond to a potential anthrax incident in the Baltimore region.

Maryland’s local health departments, OP&R and many other preparedness and response partners participated in the exercise.

The exercise was also designed to test and refine Maryland’s Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI) plans. A federally funded program, the CRI is an effort to prepare major U.S. cities and metropolitan areas to effectively respond to a large scale bioterrorist event by dispensing antibiotics to residents of the entire region within 48 hours.

Health departments in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard and Queen Anne’s counties participated.

In keeping with Governor Martin O’Malley’s core goals for a Prepared Maryland, DHMH and local health departments routinely prepare and test emergency plans to protect Maryland residents from a potential biological attack.

The exercise also tested the ability of local health departments to distribute medication in an emer-

gency, provide information to the public and media, coordinate activities and share data among various agencies. Participating jurisdictions tested a variety of components of their medication distribution plans, including mobile dispensing strategies and reaching out to at-risk populations.

“These exercises make us better prepared,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Secretary of DHMH. “Training also supports collaboration for day-to-day challenges.”

Additionally, some of the other priority areas tested included outreach messaging, communications and information sharing, emergency operations coordination, medication distribution methods and strategies, management of large quantities of medications, volunteer management, and security.

“Preparing for emergencies and testing our ability to protect the public health of Maryland residents is our primary goal in these activities,” said Fran Phillips, DHMH Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services. “We are constantly working to improve our preparedness planning and response abilities.”

By John Healy  
Public Information Officer  
Office of Preparedness and Response

## Make Your Smartphone Smarter!

As we look forward to September and National Preparedness month, we wanted to recommend a great way to keep track of your personal and family preparedness plans, as well as quickly accessing information on emergency preparedness.

The FEMA App (smartphone app for mobile devices) contains disaster safety tips, interactive lists for storing your emergency kit and emergency meeting location information, and a map with open

shelters and open FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs).

The app is free to download through your smartphone provider’s app store:

- Android devices—<http://goo.gl/xT8DB>
- Apple devices—<http://goo.gl/hcM3m>
- Blackberry devices—<http://goo.gl/fkZTI>

# Summer at DHMH



Here are a few things that DHMH and your local health departments have been involved with in the past few months:

- DHMH has alerted affected jurisdictions of extreme heat events throughout the region this summer. Guided by the Maryland Heat Emergency Plan (which can be found at <http://goo.gl/IlySp>), the plan is activated whenever heat index values have the potential to meet or exceed 105 degrees. As of August 27, there were 42 heat-related deaths in MD this season. DHMH's extreme heat webpage can be found at <http://goo.gl/H5TL8>
- Together with local health departments, we investigated and controlled about 40 outbreaks. In addition, we investigated 91 suspected cases of vaccine preventable diseases, including: 74 cases of pertussis, 13 cases of hepatitis A, 2 cases of measles, 1 case of rubella, and 1 case of mumps. For more information visit <http://goo.gl/ld112>
- Maryland reported its first West Nile Virus (WNV) case of 2012. To reduce your risk, read here: <http://dhmh.maryland.gov/publicrelations/pr/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=275>

## MD RESPONDS

Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein is a pediatrician and Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Find Dr. Sharfstein on twitter at

<http://twitter.com/drjosh>



## Preparedness Month—September

Maryland's preparedness starts with each individual citizen, so as we approach Preparedness Month we encourage you to take a look at your own National Preparedness Month & helpful links:

Main site: <http://Community.fema.gov>

New State Ready Map: <http://www.ready.gov/today>

Coalition Members: <http://community.fema.gov/connect.ti/readynpm/view?objectId=112036&exp=e1>

Events: <http://community.fema.gov/connect.ti/readynpm/view?objectId=191603&exp=e1>

Discussions: <http://community.fema.gov/connect.ti/readynpm/view?objectId=2829424&exp=e1>

Resources: <http://community.fema.gov/connect.ti/readynpm/view?objectId=196243&exp=e1>

## “Maryland Prepares” Social Media Challenge

The Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is running a social media challenge on preparedness in honor of September being Preparedness Month.

If you are interested in participating, you could win a tour of Maryland's State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), which is where DHMH and

other state agencies send representatives during emergencies and disasters.

### Who Can Play?

We encourage everyone to participate in this challenge. Winners will be chosen from Maryland.

### How Do I Play?

Every day in September a dif-

ferent challenge will be posted for you to view. You can participate on Facebook or Twitter.

Facebook Page: Maryland Emergency Management Agency

<https://www.facebook.com/MDMEMA>

Twitter: @mdmema <http://>

# Social Media Challenge Continued

[twitter.com/MDMEMA](https://twitter.com/MDMEMA)

At the end of the month, the points and names of participants will be tallied into a spreadsheet. Make sure you use the same name for each challenge so your points can be tallied under the same name at the end of the month. If you are participating on twitter, please use the hashtag #MDPrepares with your answer.

The daily challenge will be posted every morning at 9:00 am Eastern Standard Time. Each challenge is worth one point unless stated otherwise.

Some challenges will be worth more points than others so even if you miss a few, you can make up some points by participating in other daily challenges. Not all questions have a "correct" answer and will vary person to person; however, some questions have specific answers we will be looking for as responses. All questions will close for participation on September 30<sup>th</sup> at midnight.

*Disclaimer: All inappropriate comments/posts will not be counted for the challenge and will be deleted immediately from the site.*

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### What Will I Win?

The prize for the person(s) with the most points will be a tour of our State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC).

The SEOC is where DHMH and other Maryland state agencies, along with organizations such as the utility companies, coordinate state-wide responses to emergencies and disasters.

*The backpacks could make a great personal go-kit, a gym bag, or carry-on bag. They contain a lightly padded laptop compartment in*

## Update your MD Responds Profiles

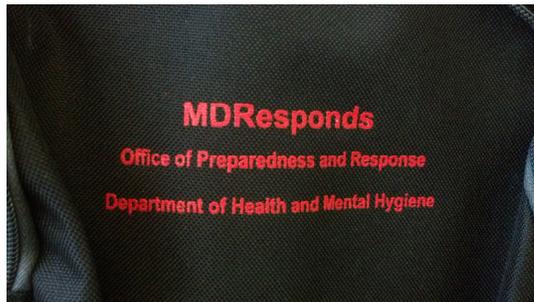
Please remember to log onto MD Responds periodically to make sure that all of your information is up to date. This is very important to us so that we can reach you in a timely manner when we have important news or volunteer opportunities.

Moving forward we have an additional incentive for ensuring that your information is up to date—MD Responds backpacks! Within these backpacks we will include some booklets we have had printed on subjects such as psychological

first aid, the Incident Command System, and other emergency preparedness information.

You'll hear more from us soon once we're ready to distribute the

backpacks to you.



*addition to plenty of storage space.*

## Feedback

As we close out our 2nd monthly newsletter, we'd like to hear what you think about it.

What can we do better? What topics interest you? Do you have any suggestions about the newsletter, the program, or anything else?

E-mail us at [MDReponds.dhmh@Maryland.gov](mailto:MDReponds.dhmh@Maryland.gov) or MD Responds on Facebook

## Volunteer Counts (as of 8/28/2012)

Nursing	1023	Physician Assistants	29
Physician	282	Dentistry	21
Pharmacy	138	Psychologists	19
Social Work	107	Respiratory Therapists	19
Counselors	46	Morticians/F.D.'s	14
Veterinary	40	Other	443
Faith-based Volunteers	35	TOTAL	2216