



News Release: For Immediate Release

DECEMBER 27, 2012

MEDIA CONTACT
JOANNE BREAUTL
joanne.breault@gmail.com

LOCAL HEALTHCARE LEADERS ATTEND FEMA TRAINING **MRC PREPARED FOR THE FLU**

FALL RIVER, MA – Alvin McMahon, Director, Greater Fall River Medical Reserve Corps and Tamra Lamothe, Somerset Town Nurse, recently attended “Pandemic Planning and Preparedness” training conducted by FEMA’s Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP) in Anniston, Alabama.

The hands-on training at the facility is an invaluable experience for meeting the requirements necessary to plan and act during a pandemic. “With the seasonal flu beginning to flare up in various parts of the United States, our training has better prepared us to coordinate a mass immunization program”, stated Alvin McMahon. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) influenza activity increased during the month of December. Seasonal influenza epidemics contribute to 30,000 deaths in the U.S. each year.

Pandemic influenza refers to the global outbreak of a new strain of the influenza virus where there is no natural immunity and can be easily spread from person to person. The real concern is that existing vaccines may not be effective and new vaccines may require considerable time to develop and distribute.

Pandemic influenza has the potential for disrupting the government and the social and economic base globally for an extended period of time. The occurrence, severity, and scope cannot be predicted. Therefore a new virus has the potential to be more severe and widespread resulting in global impact.

The training teaches the participants how to work with state and local government to access strategies and resources for their geographic area. Developing a plan can reduce the transmission and minimize the illness. An important objective is to maintain communication during a pandemic in order to critically analyze the evolving health and social environment.

MORE

CDC's campus includes public healthcare training at the Noble Training Facility. This hospital is recognized as the nation's only hospital facility dedicated to training hospital and healthcare professionals in disaster preparedness and response. "The FEMA training is extensive and packed with information. It was an excellent training with a practical drill in case I was to encounter a major pandemic with a greater magnitude than H1N1", stated Tammy Lamothe.

A second training "Healthcare Leadership for Mass Casualty Incidents" was attended by Alvin McMahon. "Although we have had minimal training on incidents resulted in some casualties, it was an eye-opener to spend one week of classes and exercises devoted to the real issues you must face when dealing with mass casualties caused by health issues", quoted Alvin McMahon.

The Greater Fall River Medical Reserve Corps is sensitive to the tenuous financial situation in Southern Massachusetts. All training at CDP is covered under a Department of Homeland Security scholarship funding and no local money was used to finance it. The training contributes to the stability of society as a whole.

The Greater Fall River Medical Reserve Corps (GFRMRC) is always looking for volunteers. Both medical and non-medical personnel are needed. All training is free. For more information about this event or volunteer opportunities, call 508-646-2807 or send an e-mail to gfrmmc@gmail.com.

Be trained. Be prepared. Be a volunteer.

END