MRC UPDATES

MRC/HOSA POD Drill Success

On January 19, 2017 Contra Costa MRC and Dozier Libbey HOSA conducted a Points of Dispensing (POD) full scale exercise. This exercise focused on providing hands on training and experience to Dozier Libbey HOSA students and allowed MRC members to continue to exercise their capabilities. The MRC has been exercising PODs at least annually as part of its first responder condensed POD dispensing plan. In the event of a bioterrorism attack or pandemic influenza, the MRC may be tasked with providing prophylaxis to Contra Costa County first responders so they can continue to work in the public during these events.

This is the second year in which HOSA students participated in the training. Students learn about POD operations as well as bioterrorism and pandemics as part of the MRC/HOSA emergency preparedness partnership. The HOSA students assign POD roles using ICS. More than 45 HOSA students filled the key roles of the POD operations. MRC members filled supervisory roles, and coached the students in each position often times encouraging them to think critically and show leadership strength. This year, the POD was much more successful. This was likely due to having experience the previous year, better planning, and better POD set-up. The POD processed 83 students in 1.5 hours. Many students identified the pace being much slower, but more efficient than last year. MRC members noticed how well the students worked together and followed instructions from their Job Action Sheets (JAS) and supervisors. Everyone did a wonderful job during this drill. The MRC continues to build critical capability for Contra Costa County.

MRC Participates in Women’s March

Contra Costa MRC was asked to provide a medical first aid station for the Women’s March occurring in Walnut Creek, CA. Women’s Marches were organized in many major cities and metropolitan location throughout the world and US for January 21, 2017. This event was a great exercise in planned mass
gatherings, and coordinating and responding in a team structure without the Coordinator. The MRC team filled all ICS roles to coordinate logistics and medical support. The event was faced with challenges right from the start. The inclement weather lead to three EMS activates very early. The crowd size was also double what it was estimated to be. The MRC team did an amazing job working with event staff, spontaneous volunteers and EMS crews to ensure crowd safety was maintained. The team shared some lessons learned from this event. 1) The radio deployment was vital to communication as cell phones would have been difficult with crowd size. 2) It was difficult to identify MRC foot team locations in the crowd and know general location. 3) MRC teams need some way of alerting EMS crews to locations in large crowds when on scene. The MRC will look to resolve these issues and share changes in a future meeting/training.

Capt. Tosatto Retiring

For those of you familiar with the National MRC chain of command, earlier this month Capt. Robert Tosatto announced his retirement from the Public Health Commission Corps. Capt. Tosatto was a strong advocate for youth engagement. He encouraged MRC units to engage and partner with HOSA, future health professionals as an MRC activity. We are grateful for his leadership and direction on this activity and know our unit is stronger because of our HOSA partnerships. Cpt. Skip Payne has been named the acting Commander for the MRC.

New Threads

The new MRC sweatshirts have arrived! As part of the AAR from the Valley Fire and through continued Challenge grant funding, the MRC was able to change their uniforms. This change will allow for better assimilation of the MRC and less confusion with other organizations.

Upcoming Events

The MRC will be participating in the following events, contact the MRC Coordinator for details and to sign up.
Community Outreach

- HOSA State Leadership Conference | Sacramento, CA | March 17, 2017
- Hands Only CPR training- Brentwood | April 5, 2017 6:30 pm | 1 volunteer is needed to teach CPR
- Hands Only CPR training- Moraga | May 6, 2017, 2016 10:00 a.m-12:00 pm | 2 volunteers needed
- DJF Heart Screening- Walnut Creek, CA | July 29, 2017 9:00- 3:00 pm | 5-7 volunteers needed for various roles

Welcome New Members

Dr. Jeffrey Diedin has finished all steps in the application process and even attended his first meeting. Welcome Aboard!

If you know anyone who wants to join the MRC, please have them contact the MRC Coordinator at 925-313-9548.

Competency Corner

Disaster Healthcare Volunteers Network

The Disaster Healthcare Volunteer Network also know as the DHV serves at the state of California’s Emergency System for Advanced Registration of Health Volunteer Professionals (ESAR VHP). This is part of a federal program to establish and implement a standard registration process for medical professionals. This system asks healthcare professionals to register their information including licensure and practice information in the event of a large scale disaster. The DHV allows for the registration of over 40 different healthcare occupations. This is well over the national requirement. The system allows for daily verification of credentials, as well as mass notification and messaging.

Did you know Contra Costa County has two different DHV systems?

Contra Costa County MRC uses the DHV system as their primary mechanism for verifying and credentialing volunteers. This system also serves as a notification platform. MRC team members respond to quarterly drills using this system. This system was used during the 2015 Valley Fire deployment to ensure appropriate team members were deployed and their credentials were verified prior to arrival in Napa Co.

Contra Costa County Public Health also maintains a DHV list. The volunteers registered in this system are simply that—a list of healthcare (or non-healthcare) volunteers that could potentially be available to deploy in a disaster.

So what’s the difference?

The MRC is a volunteer program in Contra Costa County. Our members train and exercise for disaster response. If the unit, or a portion of it is activated, they are what is considered an affiliated volunteer. We belong to an organization, have an organized structure, operating procedures and more. This is why we do not self deploy.

A person registered in the County system would still be considered an unaffiliated volunteer or spontaneous volunteer. These volunteers would still have to go through a verification process which can take time. Also, these volunteers do not receive advanced training, and participate in exercises within an organized structure like the MRC.

As an event is escalating and there is a need for volunteers, Operations Sections Chiefs look to their affiliated volunteers to fill key roles first. This allows for rapid deployment and often alleviates many of the issues surrounding spontaneous volunteer use. In a large scale disaster, or Public Health emergency, like we saw with
H1N1, both DHV systems were used to obtain the necessary number of licensed healthcare professionals for a response.

Either way—it is imperative that MRC members keep their DHV account information up to date. A prepared MRC member logs into their DHV account at least monthly to ensure their information is accurate. You should enter all information vital to your medical license, training, and contact information. Please login and update your information!

www.healthcarevolunteers.ca.gov