Promoting Use of Local Volunteer Radiation Professionals in Emergency Response to Assist in Population Monitoring and Public Shelter Operations

Ruth E. McBurney, CHP
Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors
Outline

- Background
- Description of Radiation Response Volunteer Program
- Pilot Program for Recruitment, Registry, and Training
- Current Activities in Volunteer Development
National Response Framework

Nuclear/Radiological Incident
Annex

Decontamination/Population Monitoring are:

“the responsibility of State, local, and tribal governments.”

www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf
Need for Radiation Professionals in a large scale radiation emergency

- Monitoring environment and workplace
- Monitoring people ("population monitoring")
- Supporting operations at:
  - Hospitals
  - Public and special needs shelters
  - Emergency operations centers
  - Community reception centers
- Communications
“Planners should identify radiation protection professionals in their community and encourage them to volunteer and register in any one of the Citizen Corps or similar programs in their community.”
Volunteer Radiation Professionals

- Potential pool of tens of thousands who can volunteer in their local communities.
- After a radiation emergency, many are likely to volunteer.
  - Spontaneous Unaffiliated Volunteers (SUVs)
- We need trained affiliated volunteers.
- Medical Reserve Corps can be the vehicle to recruit and train these professionals.
Description and Scope of the Radiation Response Volunteer Program Pilot

- CRCPD contract with CDC funding to conduct a program for incorporating radiation professionals into existing volunteer registries
- Pilot in 2010-11: CRCPD issued sub-contracts to state radiation control programs to assess feasibility of use of volunteer radiation protection professionals in emergency plans
- Five states and one city participated and were funded
- Quarterly and final reports from participants used in developing CRCPD final report on the pilot project
Responsibilities of State Agencies under Radiation Volunteer Project

- Pilot process for recruiting, managing and training volunteer radiation professionals
- Promote a volunteer registry of radiation professionals within existing programs
- Develop a publishable plan for effective deployment and utilization of training volunteers in alignment with state/local plans
- Develop action plan for continued and expanded use of program
Outcomes of Pilot Program:
Accomplishments

- Increased awareness of need for population monitoring system
- Potential pool of volunteer radiation professionals identified
- Various methodologies for mobilization identified
- Significant number of volunteers trained and materials accrued to assist with population monitor/public shelter needs
- Process for registering solidified
- Outreach to radiation professionals
Outcomes of Pilot Program: Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Electronic reference material provides instant resources
- Need for increased communication and collaboration between radiation control programs and volunteer organization (MRC)
- Long term funding mechanisms needed for follow-up training and drills
- In some cases, volunteer development can be carried out more efficiently by local radiation professional societies
- Triage and instructions are needed for non-removable contamination
Current and Future Activities

- CDC/CRCPD 5-year cooperative agreement for development and enhancement of the radiation volunteer program
- System of sub-awards to state radiation control and public health preparedness programs, MRC units and HPS Chapters
- Training and exercises keep volunteers active and engaged
- Outreach at meetings of radiation professionals
- Coordination with Medical Reserve Corps
2012-13 RRVC Projects

- 10 sub-awards issued to state radiation control in programs and public health preparedness programs in 2012
- Only one state program had participated in the pilot—remainder were new to the project
- New sub-awards in process of issuance (8-10) for 2013
  - New state programs added
  - One local chapter radiation professional society
  - One territory
  - Several local MRC’s and public health preparedness units
Communication Among Participants

- Sharepoint on CRCPD website for tools and resources
  - Recruitment brochures
  - Training
  - Exercises
  - Incorporation of volunteers into state emergency plans

- Teleconferences

- Reports
Future Goal

Build a sustainable action plan for continued use of the program and engagement of radiation volunteers in local reception centers at both areas of radiological event occurrence and receiving locations.

More information at:
www.crcpd.org