



JUNE 2014



SAN DIEGO HEALTHCARE DISASTER COUNCIL

This Month in the Council



The citizens of San Diego count on us to be prepared in the event of a disaster. We as the San Diego Healthcare Disaster Council and support services proudly accept this challenge

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Each month at the Healthcare Disaster Council, disaster preparedness professionals come together for in-depth, passionate dialogue about a range of topics. Here's a glimpse at some of the discussion in May:

- Dr. Danyte Mockus-Valenzuela and Theresa Vasquez from Behavioral Health Services, Planning and Prevention Unit, came and gave a presentation entitled *Behavioral Health Services Disaster Response*.
- Thérèse Rymer was presented with a recognition award for all her hard work over the years. This was Ms. Rymer's last meeting. Ms. Rymer is retiring from UCSD,
- There was a debriefing held with the hospitals that participated in the 2014 Spring Drill.
- Hospital Incident Command System (HICS) is still set for a May release.

Trainings and Drills

Statewide Medical Health Full Scale Exercise Thursday, November 20, 2014

Joint EOC / WebEOC Workshops

specify which *dates* and which *segments* you would like to attend.

Agenda:

9:00 - 10:30: SEMS/NIMS Introduction
10:30 - 11:30: WebEOC Overview
11:30 - 12:30: WebEOC Subject Specific
12:30 - 1:30: Lunch (on your own)
1:30 - 4:30: EOC Section Specific

Available Dates:

July 17, 2014 (Planning-Intel Section)
September 25, 2014 (Finance Section)

Location:

Registration is available via email at: WebEOC@sdcounty.ca.gov. Please include your contact information and

Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
5580 Overland Ave. Suite 100
San Diego, CA 92123



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This Month's Focus

Hospitals Join Partners in Mass Rescue Operation Exercise

By: **Thérèse Rymer, UC San Diego Health System**

San Diego hospitals were privileged to participate in the Mass Rescue Operations Exercise 2014 (MRO) on March 5, 2014. The event was held at San Diego Mission Bay Headquarters (Lifeguard Headquarters) and offered an ideal location for communication, water rescue, helicopter support and EMS hand-off of victims from a simulated maritime accident.

The San Diego Lifeguards, in collaboration with the U.S. Coast Guard and multiple response agencies, spearheaded the exercise. UC San Diego Health System organized the San Diego hospitals with the support of Palomar and Sharp Healthcare who represented area hospitals at preplanning meetings. Close collaboration with American Red Cross (ARC) provided a rich environment to retest and expand communication plans previously tested with the airline industries and the San Diego tribal nations.

UC San Diego and Palomar Health Systems generated the opportunity for hospital participation in the MRO as part of the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) commitment following conversations with the Coast Guard. MRO Exercise Director, Sgt. James Gartland, welcomed hospital involvement and did an excellent job in directing planning activities. Planning began in October 2013, with an accelerated schedule for the planning conferences. By mid-January 2014, thirteen hospitals, ARC and County members had met to confirm the healthcare targeted plans.

ARC planned a Family Assistance Center serving as the single point of information. They modified a form to capture victim descriptions from maritime accidents and agreed to use the hospital maritime workbook. ARC added their information to the workbook thus partnering with the hospitals.

The primary focus of the hospitals included testing communication functions for victim tracking, simulating family members seeking loved ones and interviews with ARC volunteers. Triage teams received victims from EMS as they were delivered to the simulated hospital set up on the exercise site. Teams collaborated as a single unit representing all hospital facilities in addressing care and treatment of victims.

Behind the scenes, the UCSD BASE Station coordinated radio contact with receiving and satellite hospitals, communicating with Exercise MedCom. ARC contacted hospitals with victim names and requested assistance from hospitals on identification of any unknown victims from the accident.

The exercise was a packed and unique experience. A successful exercise, the identification of some improvement opportunities will streamline hospital response. Bed status from the hospitals was slightly delayed. In analysis of the event, it was determined that not all hospitals have staff dedicated only to monitoring the radios thus the response to the request for bed status can be delayed. The use of technology for a ONE CALL or group notification for the initial alert would streamline the notification process and direct hospitals to a dedicated radio channel resulting in an earlier response.

Likewise, multiple calls were required to confirm the location of victims at area hospitals. The analysis revealed hospitals demonstrated the capability of communicating with ARC in confirming the location of both identified victims and the number of received unidentified victims. However, communication required multiple return calls, confirmation and verification. This pattern will be difficult in a large-scale event and centralization may streamline information collection.



Hospital Team attend MRO Victim

The MRO Exercise was a special opportunity for many. Thirty-nine individuals participated on-site from hospitals, county, and ARC in addition to other healthcare personnel located at their individual facilities. We were pleased to join the many response agencies as they demonstrated strength and growth in preparation for maritime emergencies.