



Massachusetts Nurses Association's Emergency Preparedness Work

MNA RNs Respond to Disasters

MNA nurses have a long history of assisting in disasters. In recent years, members have responded to Hurricane Katrina victims in New Orleans in 2005, to victims of the power outage affecting the Worcester, Massachusetts area two years ago, to victims of Hurricane Gustav and other terrible storms, and in many other ways.

In addition to volunteering on site or as DMAT volunteers, nurses have organized donations, mailed scrubs and personal care items to nurses who were onsite in New Orleans, volunteered at the Otis base on the Cape, and coordinated communications with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. MNA developed a Haiti response website, posted frequent communications from members volunteering in Haiti, and provided assistance to nurses wanting to volunteer. MNA nurses have also helped support Partners in Health in their work in Haiti with short-term nurse volunteers.

Disaster Prevention

One typically doesn't think of disasters as "preventable", but MNA has taken a strong activist role in preventing prevent Boston University from locating a dangerous biolab on the campus of Boston Medical Center. During this continuing ten-year struggle, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court and a Massachusetts Superior Court judge have backed MNA's position. MNA is proud of its efforts to date to halt a potentially lethal disaster from occurring in our own backyard.

Emergency Preparedness ("EP") Task Force

The MNA Emergency Preparedness Task Force meets periodically. Anyone who is interested as needed should contact Mary Crotty at mcrotty@mnarn.org or at 781 830-5743.

Emergency Preparedness Manual

The EP Task Force has developed an Emergency Preparedness Manual with hard copies of information which may be useful should websites/pc access be unavailable.

All Hazard Disaster Preparedness Course

MNA has offered a 3-session course on "All Hazards" approach to Disaster Preparedness which was very well received.

Legislation/Liability Protection

The MNA EP Task Force drafted a bill which would provide liability protections for nurses who volunteer in emergencies. A hearing on the bill was held last Spring.

Emergency Preparedness Volunteering: MNA's "EPVOL" list

MNA has developed and maintains a database of nurses interested in volunteering during a future disaster. The list includes volunteers' contact information, area(s) of expertise and languages spoken. Members are periodically contacted with information of potential interest and to keep the database up-to-date. This has become even more important since the Commonwealth still has no working database of volunteers or disaster plan.

For more information

MNA strongly encourages nurses to participate at the local level, to become involved with their town or city Board of Health or Health Department's emergency preparedness planning committee and to become "CERT" trained (Community Emergency Response Team).

- To find the closest CERT training in MA: www.citizencorps.gov
- For information on Massachusetts' Medical Reserve Corps or to find your local MRC: www.mamedicalreservecorps.org

For more information or to sign up as an "EPVOL": <http://www.massnurses.org/nursing-resources/emerg-prep/form> or contact Mary Crotty at mcrotty@mnarn.org or 781.830.5743