Caddo County Health Department

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Caddo County Health Department Seeks Volunteers for Support After Disasters

Disasters can strike anywhere at any time. Whether it's a natural disaster such as a tornado, or a man-made terrorist attack, there is a need for volunteers to respond to all hazards, as well as to provide public health support throughout the year. It is for that reason that the Oklahoma Medical Reserve Corps (OKMRC) was established.

The OKMRC, Oklahoma's only medical and public health volunteer program, is directed by the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH). It is a statewide system comprised of specialty teams, and county units operating under the authority of local county health departments. The program's main objective is establishing a system to identify, train, and organize medical and public health professionals, as well as lay volunteers to supplement and support on-going emergency response systems and personnel.

Rebecca Villa-Winsett is the OKMRC coordinator for Caddo County who oversees the administrative process and ensures volunteers have proper credentials for their volunteer assignment.

"Oklahomans are known for their ability to come together and assist others in times of tragedy," said Villa-Winsett. "OKMRC provides the opportunity for people to offer their services in a coordinated and effective manner."

Currently, there are more than 5,000 OKMRC members throughout the state. Many are volunteers who are practicing or retired medical professionals such as doctors, nurses, emergency medical technicians, pharmacists, hospital-based workers, nurse assistants, veterinarians, dentists and others with health/medical training. However, it's not a requirement for a volunteer to have a medical background. Community citizens without medical training can assist the primary health teams with administrative assistance, communications, record keeping and other support functions.

All OKMRC organizations share the common goals of:

- Creating teams of volunteer medical, public health, and lay professionals to help during emergencies and disasters.
- Offering education and prevention to improve the public health of neighborhoods and communities.

Upon entering the program, volunteers are trained about a community's emergency procedures, trauma response techniques, use of specialized equipment and other information.

For more information about the organization or to become a volunteer, contact Rebecca at 405-247-2507, or visit the website at www.okmrc.org.

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