September is National Preparedness Month!

National Preparedness Month provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the important work we all do to ensure our communities are safe, healthy, and ready for emergencies. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management (OPEM) is, once again, sponsoring a statewide campaign to encourage Massachusetts residents, families, and communities to make plans and prepare for public health and medical emergencies, threats, and disasters.

This year’s Know Plan Prepare campaign continues the legacy of the Together We’re Ready: Massachusetts Prepared campaign of previous years. OPEM offers a number of preparedness materials available to order including a secure document bag. Making a kit is fundamental for emergency preparedness. And one of the key things to include in your kit is copies of important papers like insurance documents, Social Security cards, and prescriptions. This document bag is a great way to know which papers to copy, organize, and contain them so that you can grab and go when disaster strikes.

DPH maintains one central web page at http://www.mass.gov/knowplanprepare to provide information, tips and links for the public. The web page also provides resources to support local, regional and state preparedness initiatives for you to use with your community or organization.

Stop the Bleed Initiative

OPEM is partnering with the Massachusetts Medical Society to coordinate and provide five regional train-the-trainer sessions in various locations for eligible medical volunteers from each of the MRC units. The trainings will provide hands-on regional instruction in bleeding control, wound packing, and tourniquet application as well as information on how to register as an instructor, instructor responsibilities, and tips for planning a training in your community. The trainings will be held during Quarters 1, 2 and 3. More information on the training locations and registration will be sent to unit leaders for dissemination to volunteers. Please contact Vanessa Kenealy at the Massachusetts Medical Society with any questions you may have. General information and resources on bleeding control can be found at www.bleedingcontrol.org and http://www.massmed.org/bleedingcontrol.

The Ready Campaign

Launched in February 2003, Ready is a National public service campaign designed to educate and empower the American people to prepare for, respond to and mitigate emergencies, including natural and man-made disasters. The goal of the campaign is to promote preparedness through public involvement.

Ready and its Spanish language version, Listo, asks individuals to do four key
things: (1) stay informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and their appropriate responses (2) make a family emergency plan and (3) build an emergency supply kit, and (4) get involved in your community by taking action to prepare for emergencies. For more information and resources to empower individuals, families, communities and businesses to prepare for emergencies and disasters, visit www.Ready.gov.

Communities Responding to Extreme Weather (CREW) and Climate Preparedness Week
Communities Responding to Extreme Weather (CREW) is a Massachusetts grassroots organization that works with communities to help them prepare for climate change impacts such as extreme heat, stronger storms, and sea level rise. They empower the communities to utilize their established social networks and anchor institutions like libraries to prepare for, weather, and recover from these climate-induced extreme weather events.

Climate Preparedness Week takes place at the end of National Preparedness Month, September 24-30th—which is an opportunity to raise awareness of climate change impacts and empower your community to meet these challenges head on. Please visit the CREW website for more information of events in and around your community.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES & UPCOMING EVENTS

The Massachusetts EMS Conference
October 10-11, 2019
MGM MassMutual Center
Springfield, MA
The Massachusetts EMS conference provides innovative topics that focus on the future of EMS and the latest practices, exhibitors who will demonstrate state-of-the-art products, services, and technology, relevant and reliable information you can take back and share with your organization, respected national, regional and local speakers, and networking with colleagues from across New England and beyond. For more information, please visit: http://www.massemsconference.com/.

24th Annual Massachusetts Immunization Action Partnership (MIAP) Pediatric Immunization Skills Building Conference
October 17, 2019
Sheraton Framingham Hotel and Conference Center
Framingham, MA
This full-day conference is focused on pediatric immunization. More than 400 immunization providers attend the conference to support statewide efforts to optimize pediatric immunization in Massachusetts. The conference provides the most current pediatric immunization information and offers the opportunity for participants to network with colleagues and to share strategies for improving Massachusetts pediatric immunization rates. For more information on this year’s speakers and registration information, please visit: https://mcaap.org/immunization-initiative/immunization-cme/.

American Public Health Association Annual Meeting and Expo
November 2-6, 2019
Pennsylvania Convention Center
Philadelphia, PA
The APHA Annual Meeting & Exposition attracts more than 13,000 national and international physicians, administrators, nurses, educators, researchers,
epidemiologists, and related health specialists. The 2019 APHA Annual Meeting theme is "Creating the Healthiest Nation: For science. For action. For health." For session descriptions and registration information, please visit: http://www.apha.org/events-and-meetings/annual.

Massachusetts Health Officers Association Annual Conference
November 6-9, 2019
Sea Crest Beach Hotel
Falmouth, MA
The 2019 MHOA Annual Conference is the largest annual public health conference in New England. The conference provides opportunities for public health practitioners, researchers, and subject matter experts to share the latest researches, ideas, and strategies on local public health. Attendees will learn practical and effective tools, concepts, and operational insights to better confront challenges facing many local health departments today. Registration, the conference schedule, and hotel information for the MHOA annual conference are available at https://conference.mhoa.com/.

MA Responds Orientation Curriculum
The course provides an overview on how to prepare for and respond to a public health emergency or other event. It is intended to complement additional training volunteers will receive their local MRC unit or other volunteer group. Modules include: Public Health Preparedness, Incident Command System, Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication, Personal Preparedness, Activation, Safety and Security, Individuals with Disabilities or Access and Functional Needs, and Disaster Mental Health. Volunteers are able to request a certificate of completion when they finish the MA Responds on-line curriculum learning modules. A certificate will be sent to volunteers via email. The course can be accessed by going to: www.massmed.org/intro/maresponds.

2019 National Seasonal Preparedness Messaging Calendar
The 2019 National Seasonal Preparedness Messaging Calendar and key messages provide content to help promote preparedness throughout the year. Please feel free to adapt topics to reflect hazards that can affect your local area, using this calendar as a guide. Emergencies can happen at any time. To access the calendar click here.

Stay Put - Learn How to Shelter in Place
Sometimes the best way to stay safe in an emergency is to get inside and stay put inside a building or vehicle. Where you should stay can be different for different types of emergencies. Be informed about the different kinds of emergencies that could affect your area and ways officials share emergency information. Ask your local emergency management agency about the best places to take shelter during different types of emergencies. To learn more about sheltering in place, click here.

Upcoming 2019-2020 Flu Season
The timing of flu is unpredictable and can vary from season to season. Seasonal flu activity can begin as early as October and continue to occur as late as May. Flu activity most commonly peaks in the United States in January or February. Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine every season, especially people at high risk. Please visit: https://www.cdc.gov/flu/season/flu-season-2019-2020.htm to learn more.
Tornado Safety Tips
Although tornados are rare in Massachusetts, it is becoming more usual to have a tornado watch and/or warning issued when summer and fall storms occur. To read more about tornado preparedness, please visit here.

Download Ping4Alerts! Smartphone App
Receive Emergency Alerts and Critical Information on your Smartphone. The app helps keep users alerted to severe weather (tornados, hurricanes and tropical storms, severe thunderstorms) as well as informed and up to date on all important local emergency alerts, critical news and events. You will receive location-based alerts based on your selected preferences and proximity to specific events. The ping4alerts! app is currently available for iOS (Apple) and Android platforms. Download it by searching for “ping4alerts!” on the App Store or Android Market.

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) has additional information regarding emergency alerts here.