



Los Angeles County ESAR VHP

Emergency System for Advance Registration
of Volunteer Health Professionals

MEMBER HANDBOOK 2008



In collaboration with:

Los Angeles County Department
of Health Services, Emergency
Medical Services Agency



Los Angeles County Department
of Public Health

Volunteer Center of Los Angeles- ALSC



Medical Reserve Corps – Los Angeles,
Long Beach, & Beach Cities



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Preface

The events of September 11th and Hurricane Katrina pointed to the need for organized systems to recruit and mobilize qualified medical, health and mental health volunteers. Developing and implementing such a volunteer system in a county as large as Los Angeles presents many challenges. Serving a county of over 4,000 square miles, 88 incorporated cities, more than 250 additional communities, and a population of 10.1 million, it is estimated that we will need over 45,000 volunteers to support mass dispensing of medication and approximately 4,000 medical volunteers for surge capacity staffing at area hospitals.

Although the US Census lists 300,000 healthcare management and support workers in Los Angeles County, it would prove difficult mobilizing a group of that size to assist in response in a rapid fashion without a pre-existing volunteer system. As recent disasters demonstrate, many health and medical providers are eager and willing to volunteer professional health services in an emergency. To meet the extraordinary demands of a large-scale emergency, hospitals and other providers of healthcare will depend upon the services that medical, health and mental health volunteers can provide. However, in a time of emergency, utilizing the capabilities of these volunteers presents a major challenge to hospital, public health, and emergency authorities.

To meet this increased need for medical and health care personnel following disasters, Los Angeles County launched the Emergency System for the Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (LA County ESAR VHP) in March, 2007. The LA County ESAR VHP disaster volunteer program recruits, registers, and pre-credentials medical, health, mental health and other volunteers in advance of the next large scale disaster or other public health emergency.

The LA County ESAR VHP program is a collaborative partnership between the Department of Health Services, Emergency Medical Services Agency, the Department of Public Health, the Volunteer Center of Los Angeles, and CheckPoint Credentials Management Services (an AllHealth Company). Los Angeles County ESAR VHP is part of a nation-wide effort aimed to pre-register and pre-screen volunteers to provide critical health services following a terrorist attack, disaster, or other public health emergencies.

Welcome Los Angeles County ESAR VHP

Dear ESAR VHP Volunteer,

On behalf of the Los Angeles County ESAR VHP Team we would like to welcome and thank you for registering as part of our volunteer registry. You are a valued member for the Los Angeles County disaster and preparedness community and we appreciate your commitment and desire to assist your community. You and all of the other ESAR VHP volunteers are a dedicated and committed group who donate your time and talent to help protect, maintain and improve the safety and health of Los Angeles County.

This handbook was created to give you essential information about the background, policies and expectations as an ESAR VHP volunteer. It has been organized to help you find information quickly and easily. Please take the time to read through it and use it as a quick reference guide whenever any questions arise.

Feel free to contact the ESAR VHP management team if you have any questions about the content of this handbook or if your question is beyond the scope of this guide.

We hope that you find being part of the Los Angeles County ESAR VHP a positive and rewarding experience.

With many thanks.



Los Angeles County ESAR VHP

PURPOSE

Part of a nation-wide effort to pre-register and pre-screen medical, health, mental health and non-medical volunteers to provide critical health services following a terrorist attack, disaster, or other public health emergencies.

OBJECTIVES

The ESAR-VHP program is guided by four fundamental objectives to ensure the proper development and operation of the ESAR VHP System. These objectives are:

- Ensuring an adequate and competent health volunteer force
- Enabling efficient and effective emergency operations
- Allowing sharing of health volunteers across state lines
- Establishing clear protections for health volunteers, hospitals, and others.

GOALS

The goal of the Los Angeles County ESAR VHP program is to eliminate the following problems:

- Identification of medical, health and mental health professionals at disaster sites
- Validation of practice and license (credentialing)
- Proper credentialing and training for volunteers.

Structure of the LA County ESAR VHP

The Los Angeles County ESAR VHP System is organized under the Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services Agency and Department of Public Health. As the system requires the management of a large volume of volunteers, Los Angeles County has contracted with the Volunteer Center of Los Angeles to provide the overall administration of ESAR VHP volunteers, including outreach, recruitment, data management and volunteer training and development.

When ESAR VHP volunteers are mobilized for an exercise or an actual event, the National Incident Management System (NIMS) will be followed and the volunteers will follow the established command and control structure. The ESAR VHP management team will follow the Incident Command System (ICS) for activating volunteers and deploying. It is important for ESAR VHP volunteers to understand that there is an organizational structure for managing an event. The ESAR VHP volunteer's position in the organizational structure will depend on the assigned role they are serving during an event. Job assignments will be based on the event and type of volunteer skills needed to respond to the event.

LA County ESAR VHP Teams, Roles and Responsibilities

The Los Angeles County ESAR VHP program is composed of four teams. You are a member of one of these teams based on your profession, skills and training. All teams will provide invaluable service to the Los Angeles County community in a time of disaster.

The four ESAR VHP teams are as follows:

Hospital Surge Team

As part of the Hospital Surge Team, you will be asked to report to a hospital in the Los Angeles County area to provide care (according to your specialty) following a disaster, terrorist attack or other public health emergency.

Members of the Hospital Surge Team are:

- A medical, health, or mental health professional with a current unrestricted license.
- Currently working or privileged at an "acute care" hospital in Los Angeles County.
- Interested in reporting to a hospital and assisting with hospital surge following a disaster.

If you are a Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) or Doctor of Osteopathy (D.O.), you also must have active, associate, provisional, or courtesy hospital privileges at a Los Angeles area hospital.

Burn Surge Team

As part of the Burn Surge Team, you will be asked to report to a hospital in the Los Angeles County area where there is a "surge" of burn patients to provide care (according to your specialty) following a disaster, terrorist attack or other public health emergency.

Members of the Burn Surge Team are:

- A medical, health, or mental health professional with a current unrestricted license.
- Currently working or privileged at an "acute care" hospital in Los Angeles County.
- Experienced in burn care.
- Interested in reporting to a hospital and assisting with hospital burn surge following a disaster.

Alternate Care Site Team

As part of the Alternate Care Site Team, you will be asked to report to an alternate care site (mobile or temporary field hospital, health clinic, disaster shelter, or first aid station) in the Los Angeles County area to provide care (according to your specialty) following a disaster, terrorist attack or other public health emergency.

Members of the Alternate Care Team are:

- A medical, health, or mental health professional with a current unrestricted license.
- Currently employed in a medical, health, or mental health setting.
- Interested in volunteering at an alternate care site (first aid station, mobile hospital, shelter, etc) following a disaster.

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

There are three (3) MRC units collaborating with Los Angeles County ESAR VHP:

- MRC Los Angeles
- Beach Cities MRC
- Long Beach MRC

Each MRC unit has a unique mission to serve the needs of their local communities.

The Department of Public Health will ask the Medical Reserve Corps to assist with their emergency response. Various skills and functions will be needed to assist the large numbers of Angelenos affected during a disaster or public health emergency. Some of these functions will include vaccinating or dispensing pharmaceuticals, patient screening, distribution of information, directing people, providing mental health consultation, and data entry. MRC volunteer assignments will be determined according to skills and needs. Medical Reserve Corps is comprised of volunteers from all professions and skill levels.

MRC teams may also be deployed for other emergencies including mass casualties at the request of Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services.

Members of the Medical Reserve Corps are:

- Volunteers with medical, health, or mental health experience with a current and unrestricted license.
- Retired medical, health, or mental health professionals.
- Professionals with a Public Health background and training are encouraged to apply.
- All Angelenos interested in responding to public health emergencies are encouraged to apply.

ESAR VHP Credentialing Levels

ESAR VHP volunteers are credentialed according to National guidelines. The following are the requirements for each level:

All levels require that volunteers are not on the Federal Exclusion List.

LEVEL 1

- Current unrestricted professional license or certification
- Currently working or privileged in an acute care hospital

LEVEL 2

- Current unrestricted professional license or certification
- Clinically active in any setting other than hospital (e.g. clinic, private practice, or nursing home)

LEVEL 3

- Current unrestricted professional license or certification

LEVEL 4

- Education or Experience in healthcare
- General volunteers with needed skills

ESAR VHP Volunteer Registration

In the process of becoming an ESAR VHP volunteer you were required to complete an application that captured the information necessary to register you as a volunteer and to credential you according to national ESAR VHP guidelines. These guidelines state that the professionals with the following specialties must be sent to a credentials verification management company to have medical credentials verified:

- Advance Practice Registered Nurse
- Dentist
- Licensed Clinical Psychologist
- Nurse Practitioner - Certified Nurse Anesthetist, Certified Nurse Midwife, Certified Nurse Specialist
- Physician
- Physician Assistant
- Podiatrist
- Psychiatrist

For the Los Angeles County ESAR VHP program, CheckPoint Credentials Management Services is the company that is conducting primary source verification

for the above volunteer specialties. All other volunteers, regardless of specialty or profession, are credentialed through the ESAR VHP management team. This is a simplified process which includes submission of a copy of a work or professional identification card and online verification of certifications and additional licenses.

In addition to the application and the credentialing process, the Los Angeles County ESAR VHP system requires that all volunteers be registered biometrically into the system. The biometric registration consists of a fingerprint scan and a photograph. This biometric information allows ESAR VHP volunteers to mobilize and check-in for volunteer duty during a disaster simply by providing a fingerprint, alleviating the need to provide certification and license documents on site.

The LA County ESAR VHP system is committed to the security of our volunteer's information. The documents and information you have provided to become a volunteer is stored on a highly secured system and will only be accessible to official ESAR VHP representatives. Be assured that your contact information will only be used to assist us in contacting you regarding trainings and emergency deployment. We do not sell, rent or otherwise share your personal information with any third parties.

If you should have any questions regarding the volunteer registration process or should need to update your contact information, please feel free to contact the ESAR VHP management team at er@vcla.net or (818) 908-5128.

ESAR VHP Meetings and Trainings

The Los Angeles ESAR VHP will meet annually at the ESAR VHP Training Conference. This conference is traditionally held in late summer and allows for all current ESAR VHP members to come together for training and networking. Participation for this event is not mandatory, but highly recommended. Trainings may be available throughout the year. ESAR VHP members will receive invitations based on team status.

Activation of ESAR VHP Volunteers

The plan for mobilizing ESAR VHP volunteers and resources during a public health emergency or disaster depends on the nature and scope of the event. Depending on the incident and needs, the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health and Emergency Medical Services will activate ESAR VHP volunteers. The ESAR VHP Management Team working in collaboration with the Volunteer Center of Los Angeles will activate ESAR VHP members through e-mails, phone calls and media notification. Volunteers will be given instruction on where, when and to whom to report. **No ESAR VHP volunteer shall self-deploy.**

For Beach Cities MRC and Long Beach MRC, volunteer requests will be sent to the MRC Coordinators and deployed by the Coordinators in coordination with ESAR VHP Management Team.

In an attempt to have swift and efficient activation and deployment of volunteers, it is imperative that the ESAR VHP volunteers provide updated contact information.

Identification

Each LA County ESAR VHP member will be registered biometrically and will be checked-in for disaster response via fingerprint scan. The Biometric registration consists of a picture and a fingerprint. These two pieces of information are automatically linked to the volunteer file and allows immediate access at the site of an incident to member information, including contact information, profession, medical specialty and credential level. You will need to bring a form of government issued identification even though it may not be used for check-in with us.

Disaster Service Worker (DSW) Registration

LA County ESAR VHP members must be fully registered with ESAR VHP to be deployed. Full registration includes a Disaster Service Worker Form and Loyalty Oath that must be completed in person.