**Exercise * Exercise * Exercise***

_Former Employee Returns with Deadly Intent_ would have been the headline had this exercise been real. Gwinnett, Newton, and Rockdale County Emergency Preparedness staff and several members of Environmental Health participated alongside law enforcement and emergency personnel from Rockdale, DeKalb, Walton and Newton Counties for their _Bio Lab Exercise_ in Rockdale County.

Bio Lab’s chemical manufacturing plant, located in Conyers, GA, produces plastic materials, synthetic resins, and nonvulcanizable elastomers.

The Exercise Scenario: _A chemist had been part of a “reduction in force” three days ago. Angry with being laid off, he came back armed. Upon entering Bio Lab property, he shot the guard that tried to stop him and loosened the valve on a tanker filled with hydrochloric acid. He then took several hostages inside the production area while he mixed a nasty chlorine gas surprise._

This successful exercise helped all agencies involved meet the goals of relationship development, pre-event planning, live-action practice, and engaging with a variety of response partner. Planning and exercising, while things are calm, is an important way to prepare for the chaos that can happen during a disaster.

**Identify the Icky!**  This is a lung infection in which the small, air-exchanging sacs of the lungs become inflamed and filled with fluid. It can come on suddenly and in serious cases it can take your breath away. However, there is a vaccine to keep it at bay. Do you know what it is? Look for the answer to this brainteaser hidden somewhere in the newsletter! If you know the answer, be the first to send an email to suleima.salgado@gnrhealth.com to win a special prize.
Quarterly Planning Meetings are Back

Prior to the onset of H1N1, the Emergency Preparedness Program held quarterly meetings for a group called the Healthcare Emergency Steering Committee in Gwinnett county and in Newton or Rockdale counties. Once H1N1 took over our lives, these formal meetings were eliminated because most of us were in regular communication with one another and actively working on addressing H1N1 planning and response.

We would like to announce that these meetings have returned under a new name - Healthcare Emergency Local Planning (HELP) Committee, with an expanded set of participants, and a more clearly defined purpose. While Public Health will take the lead on organizing these meetings, they will now be more of a collaborative effort, so that we can all benefit from the variety of expertise that participating agencies bring to the table.

**Mission Statement:** To gather together (quarterly) local (Gwinnett, Newton, and Rockdale) emergency responders that have a role in any healthcare-related disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery to facilitate improved planning, coordination, collaboration, and exercise development/cooperation.

**Who:** Emergency planning representatives from groups such as Public Health, Hospitals, Medical Examiners, Fire/Hazmat, EMS, EMA, LT Care Facilities, Business Community/C of C, Public Schools, Private Schools, Colleges/Universities, Law Enforcement, Sheriff/Corrections, Private Clinics, Special Needs Groups, Volunteer Groups, and more.

**When:** To meet for no more than two hours at 8:30 AM on the last non-holiday Thursday of March, June, September, and December in Gwinnett County, and the last non-holiday Friday of those same months in Newton/Rockdale.

**Where:** Gwinnett – Either Gwinnett County Health Departments Administrative Offices, Gwinnett Medical Center, or Gwinnett EMA HQ, as specified. Rockdale – alternate between Newton Medical Center and Rockdale Medical Center, as specified.

Please be on the lookout for more detailed information about future dates, times, and locations.

Medical Reserve Corps– Georgia East Metro Chapter

With the advent of the new year, opportunities abound for MRC-GEM members to extend their knowledge and skills. We already have some continuous Saturday morning training events schedules for yearly certifications. For example, the annual First Aid and CPR/AED (re) certification classes are held each March and April, respectively.

However, the first part of each year is filled with other events where MRC-GEM members can gain valuable insights into public health and disaster response. These include:

- Regions IV and VI Joint MRC Conference (January 19-21)
- Explosion and Blast Injuries Course (February 4)
- Public Health Preparedness Summit (February 22-25)
- Georgia MRC Conference (March 7-8)
- Public Health and Radiation Emergency Radiation Preparedness Conference (March 21-24)
- Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness and Response Training Summit (May 1-5)

While there is a cost to attend some of these events, MRC-GEM strives to open interesting and relevant learning opportunities such as these to all its members. For more information, please check the MRC-GEM web site, [http://mrcgem.com](http://mrcgem.com), or send an e-mail to [training@mrcgem.com](mailto:training@mrcgem.com).
Quick Preparedness Tip:

A small bag of essentials in your car is really all you need should you have a flat tire or be stranded for an extended period of time. Here are a few things to keep on hand in your car, in case of an emergency.

- **Flashlight**: To avoid having to remember to change the batteries, purchase a battery free model that shakes or cranks to light up.
- **Garbage bag**: This makes for a great poncho to protect from rain or road grime while changing a tire – simply poke holes for arms and head. It can be used as a blanket to keep in body heat. You can also carry water or remove waste.
- **Bottled water**: But, do watch the dates – even water expires.
- **Crackers or energy bars**: These are good, non-perishable snacks, but watch out for things that melt.
- **Whistle**: The sound travels further, lasts longer and is more recognized as a call for help than your voice.
- **Toolkit**: This includes pocket knife, tape, and other tools.
- **Gloves**: To protect your hands while performing maintenance.

**ICKY**: Pneumonia aka Streptococcus Pneumoniae

Announcing the new logo for the Public Health Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response

This logo visually incorporates Public Health’s all-hazards approach to planning and sends the messages of preparedness, response, authority, continuity and, most importantly, cooperation amongst all agencies.

You will begin to see this logo in future correspondence and print documents in conjunction with our existing GNR Health Department logo.

Gwinnett, Newton, and Rockdale County Health Departments
Emergency Preparedness Program
2570 Riverside Parkway P.O. Box 897 Lawrenceville, GA 30046

Phone: 770-339-4260 www.gnrhealth.com
Shingles, also known as herpes zoster, is a disease that causes a painful skin rash. The word shingles comes from Latin *cingulus*, a variant of Latin *cingulum* meaning "girdle" as most often the rash appears on the trunk of the body. Shingles can lead to severe pain that can last for months or even years, a condition known as post-herpetic neuralgia. Shingles can lead to other serious complications and, in rare cases, death. The virus that causes Shingles, varicella zoster virus (VZV), is the same virus that causes chickenpox. After recovering from chickenpox, the virus stays in the body in a dormant state. For reasons that are not fully known, the virus can reactivate years later, causing shingles.

Almost one out of three people in America will develop shingles during his or her lifetime. Last year, nearly one million Americans experienced the condition. Older people are at greater risk of developing shingles; about half of all cases occur among men and women 60 years old or older.

Shingles cannot be passed from person to person. However, a person with active shingles can transmit the virus to a person who has never had chickenpox through direct contact with the shingles rash. If a person who has never had chickenpox is infected with VZV, he or she will develop chickenpox, not shingles.

The only way to reduce the risk of developing shingles and the long-term pain that can follow shingles is to get vaccinated. The vaccine is available at all of our health department clinics in Gwinnett, Newton, and Rockdale Counties.

Some people in this age group should wait to get vaccinated, or should not get vaccinated at all, if they have certain medical conditions, particularly if they have a weakened immune system.

**Signs & Symptoms**

Shingles usually starts as a painful rash on one side of the face or body. The rash forms blisters that typically scab over in 7–10 days and clears up within 2–4 weeks.

Before the rash develops, there is often pain, itching, or tingling in the area where the rash will develop. This may happen anywhere from 1 to 5 days before the rash appears.

Most commonly, the rash occurs in a single stripe around either the left or the right side of the body. In other cases, the rash occurs on one side of the face. In rare cases (usually among people with weakened immune systems), the rash may be more widespread and look similar to a chickenpox rash. Shingles can also affect the eye and cause loss of vision. Additional information is available at www.cdc.gov.

### Notifiable Diseases among GNR Residents, October, 2010 December, 2010 Totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease/Condition/Pathogen</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animal Bites</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aseptic (Viral) Meningitis</td>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>&lt;5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campylobacteriosis</td>
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<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chlamydia trachomatis</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>195</td>
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<td>Cryptosporidiosis</td>
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<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giardiasis</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gonorrhea</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hepatitis A (Acute)</td>
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<td>&lt;5</td>
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<td>&lt;5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B (Acute)</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listeriosis</td>
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<td>Salmonellosis</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syphilis</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Tuberculosis</td>
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<tr>
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<td>&lt;5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yersiniosis</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>239</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>556</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*As of January 5, 2011

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**How to report a Notifiable Disease:**

Phone: 770.339.4260 Fax: 770.339.5971

Online: [http://sendss.state.ga.us](http://sendss.state.ga.us)

Download form 3095 and mail to:

Attn: EPI Unit

2570 Riverside Parkway P.O. Box 897

Lawrenceville, GA 30046

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Gwinnett, Newton, and Rockdale County Health Departments

Emergency Preparedness Program

Phone: 770-339-4260 www.gnrhealth.com

2570 Riverside Parkway P.O. Box 897 Lawrenceville, GA 30046
Meet our Newest Team Member

Gerald Gifford

We are pleased to announce that Gerald Gifford has just joined the Gwinnett, Newton, Rockdale County Health Departments Emergency Preparedness team as our first ever SNS Planner.

Gerald will be working with all planning and implementation duties associated with medical supply dispensing from the Strategic National Stockpile. This includes preparing for the annual CDC Technical Assistance Review, updating plans, identifying and planning POD locations, working with law enforcement to improve security measures, recruiting closed PODs, education and training - both external and internal, and much more.

Gerald has a varied background, including a degree in culinary arts and an interest in Tae Kwon Do. He is active in the Georgia State Defense Force, where he is a Wilderness Search & Rescue Specialist, serving in the North Georgia Mountains. He is also a Nationally Registered Emergency Medical Technician, an American Red Cross instructor, serves as the battalion medic, and is attending Police Academy. Gerald is married, and the father of two children.

Ready Georgia campaign helps residents prepare for a variety of natural disasters

Georgia has already experienced its first taste of severe weather in 2011 – a snowstorm that affected 70 percent of the state. With that in mind, the governor and GEMA / Homeland Security encourage all Georgians to participate in this year’s Severe Weather Awareness Week, Feb. 7-11, by turning to the state’s Ready Georgia campaign.

Severe Weather Awareness Week’s specific observations are:

Feb. 7 – Family Preparedness/NOAA Weather Radio Day
Feb. 8 – Thunderstorm Safety
Feb. 9 – Tornado Safety & Statewide Tornado Drill
Feb. 10 – Lightning Safety
Feb. 11 – Flood Safety

Contact Information

Gwinnett, Newton, Rockdale County Health Departments

District Administration Office 770-339-4260

Programs
Emergency Preparedness 678-442-6860
Public Info/Media Relations 678-442-6909
Epidemiology 770-339-4260
Health Promotion 678-442-6891
Children’s Medical Services 770-339-4270
Children 4
770-339-5048
Dental Program 678-442-6092
Immunizations 678-376-3202
WIC 678-442-6895

Health Centers
Lawrenceville (Gwinnett) 770-339-4283
Buford (Gwinnett) 770-614-2401
Norcross (Gwinnett) 770-638-5700
Lilburn WIC (Gwinnett) 678-924-1546
Covington (Newton) 770-786-9086
Conyers (Rockdale) 770-785-5936
Four Corners Primary Care 770-806-2928

Environmental Health Offices
District Office 770-339-4260
Gwinnett County 770-963-5132
Newton County 770-784-2121
Rockdale County 770-785-5948

PARTNERS IN PREPAREDNESS is published as a special service for the friends and partners of the GNRHD Emergency Preparedness Program.

If you wish to be added to or removed from this newsletter, please write to karen.shields@gnrhealth.com, GNR HD Public Relations Department at 2570 Riverside Parkway P.O. Box 897 Lawrenceville, GA 30046, or call 678.442.6909. We will facilitate your request before the next issue.

GNR HD Emergency Preparedness Team
Mark Reiswig, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
Jack Harper, Emergency Preparedness Specialist
Gerald Gifford, Strategic National Stockpile Planner
Michele McMahon, Healthcare Liaison
Karen Shields, Risk Communicator/PIO
Dorothy Jubon, EP Training Coordinator
Sherwin Levinson, Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator
Joyce Horton-Sliz, Administrative Assistant

PARTNERS IN PREPAREDNESS Editor
Karen Shields

If you have any questions or concerns about specific content in this newsletter, please contact our Emergency Preparedness program at 678-442-6860.