

Disaster Healthcare Volunteers of California-Glenn County Unit

What is the Disaster Healthcare Volunteers of California?

The Disaster Healthcare Volunteers (DHV) of California is a statewide system developed by the Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) to pre-identify and credential volunteer medical and health workers for deployment in disaster response and recovery activities.

The DHV of California is a part of the national program Emergency System for Advanced Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP).

Why was the DHV created?

Following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, there was an outpouring of support for the emergency relief efforts after the. Many Americans asked, "What can I do to help?" Medical and public health professionals were among those who wanted to volunteer their services, but many were not able to do so. Using public health and medical volunteers in emergencies requires an organized approach and these individuals were not known to the emergency management system. While they may have had very necessary skills and knowledge, they could not be used because they were not identified, credentialed or trained in advance.

The anthrax attacks in Fall 2001 reinforced the need for pre-identified and trained supplemental medical and public health personnel to assist with emergency operations such as mass antibiotic dispensing or mass immunization campaigns. The anthrax missions provided medications to almost 40,000 individuals. If these events were much larger, the Federal responders could have been overwhelmed and extra personnel may have been required.

To help meet these needs, the national ESAR-VHP Program was established in 2002 by Congress under the US Department of Health & Human Services. HHS works directly with states to ensure that the ESAR-VHP program is utilized and personalized in each state. As a result, the DHV of California program was developed in 2007.

Now, with the DHV in place, a formerly untapped community resource, medical and public health volunteers, is functioning and available for the community to access in emergencies and for ongoing efforts in public health.

The DHV of California Program is Flexible

The DHV of California is administered at the County level, allowing localization of the program. Glenn County is able to mold and develop a program that fits its own local needs, while maintaining its recognition in the State and National system.

The DHV Program is not only flexible at the administration level but also at the volunteer level. Volunteers are able to decide how and when they would like to volunteer. At the time of registration, the volunteer is able to set deployment preferences that range from local to national and from one day to more than 28 days. Additionally, the volunteer can decide what volunteer opportunities and deployments are right for them by simply saying yes or no to the automated calling system at the time of request for deployment.

Glenn County Unit of the DHV

Glenn County is further developing its DHV Program, taking it from a registry and credentialing system to a full volunteer program. With Glenn County's DHV Program, volunteers will have the option of participating in trainings, drills, exercises, and annual events that will further prepare them for deployment during an incident and allow them a way to give back to their community during non-disaster times.

Through this program, DHV volunteers offer their expertise throughout the year by supporting local public health initiatives, such as immunization and prevention activities. When a local emergency need occurs, DHV volunteers can work in coordination with existing local emergency response programs.

How do I register to become a Disaster Healthcare Volunteer?

Go to www.healthcarevolunteers.ca.gov . The registration process takes about 15 minutes and covers:

Identity & contact information, affiliation, deployment preferences, occupations, credentials & licensure, training, skills and certifications, & medical history.

For More Information on the DHV Program in Glenn County, contact:

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Emergency Preparedness Training Links:

Incident Command System Online Trainings: <http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp>

American Red Cross Trainings: <http://www.arcnec.org/>

Center for Domestic Preparedness Trainings: <http://cdp.dhs.gov/>