

### OWMRC CONTACTS

**Katie McDeavitt**  
OWMRC Director  
850-344-0574  
Katie.McDeavitt@flhealth.gov

**David Brinkley**  
OWMRC Coordinator  
850-344-0577  
David.Brinkley@flhealth.gov

**Shayne Stewart**  
OWMRC Team Leader  
850-344-0575  
Shayne.Stewart@flhealth.gov

**Paige Crawford**  
OWMRC Assistant Team Leader  
850-344-0576  
Paige.Crawford@flhealth.gov

**Kellie Newcomb**  
OWMRC Assistant Team Leader  
Walton County  
850-401-6364  
Kellie.Newcomb@flhealth.gov

## DOH - OKALOOSA / OWMRC HURRICANE RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

CINDY, HARVEY, IRMA, MARIA, NATE. What do these names mean to you? For us in the preparedness business, they are the names of storms that are part of a hurricane season that has produced 15 named tropical systems so far. According to the National Hurricane Center, the month of September was extremely active. Four tropical cyclones formed, all of which became hurricanes, and three of those became a major hurricanes during the month. Both Irma and Maria reached category 5 intensity in September. The NHC also reports that September 2017 was the most active month on record, breaking the previous record of September 2004 for the Accumulated Cyclone Energy (ACE). The ACE is a measurement of combined strength and duration of tropical storms and hurricanes.



We all watched as Hurricane Harvey struck Texas and flooded the City of Houston. Many Florida resources were sent to the Texas area including the Florida One Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT), the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) and various fire and rescue assets from the Central Florida area. Little did we know that in less than two weeks, we would be looking at Hurricane Irma making landfall in the Florida Keys and raking up the west side of the Florida peninsula and into Georgia.



Irma affected the entire state and caused massive evacuations, power outages, fuel shortages, flooding, structural damage to buildings in the south and southwestern part of our state. Okaloosa County opened a host shelter at Shoal River Middle School to handle evacuees from many of the affected areas. Other counties did the same to assist Floridians in need.

On September 6, 2017, we sent a request for Volunteer Nursing and Support Staff to support the Hurricane Irma response. Drills are required to be conducted every quarter, or we use the system to notify our members of emergency activations or community events. Here are the results for the latest notification call for response...

- ▶ 27 Confirmed (32.92%)
- ▶ 54 Not Confirmed (65.85%)
- ▶ 1 Confirmed late (1.21%)
- ▶ 0 Unreachable (0%)

If you are not receiving a call down from Everbridge and you are listed as a deployable volunteer, we need to update your information. We have members who are not registered. It is important to stay current with your contact info so in case there is an alert or activation to respond, you are receiving the call, email or text. There is also an App for Everbridge!

## Background Screening Update

**Without a current background check, you cannot be deployed or participate in any activation or event.**

We finally received our funding for Background screenings just a few weeks ago. I have enough money budgeted for 25 screenings, so I am very busy getting new members their initial screening, I am also checking with members who are on the roster but need the Level 2 screening due to being greater than 5 years since the last screening. We are almost done with that!

I have also been moving those members who have not responded to contacts over to the inactive file.

The re-screening requires your fingerprints to be taken at a location here in Fort Walton Beach and must be scheduled at least one week in advance. We require that you resubmit the Live Scan Information Sheet, a good color copy of your Driver's License or ID and a color copy of your Social Security Card. Indicate on the Live Scan form what day and time would be best for you to get your fingerprints recorded.

Again, if you are unable to continue your service to our MRC, we do understand. We just want you to let us know that you cannot or no longer want to be a part of the OWMRC. Send me an email and I will close your folder and move you to the inactive database.

## Please Welcome Our New Members

The Okaloosa-Walton Medical Reserve Corps welcomes the following new members that have joined this quarter:

**Rachel Syme**

**Clelia Garrity**

**Haley Bogaski**

**Zach Terry**

We have others who are currently in Researching Status and hope to have them on board soon. Upon completion of all training requirements and background screening, a new member receives a "Go-Pack" filled with response swag and reference materials, ID badge, T-shirt and Polo Shirt.

If you know anyone who would like to join us, please give them my email address and have them contact me, or forward this newsletter to them with the interest application on the back page. I will send them the information that will get them on the way to becoming a deployable OWMRC member! We need you and we need them!

## Lean On Me Project UPDATE!



So far, the Lean On Me Project has visited with **22** community members, with more scheduled in the next quarter.



## Hurricane Response Activities . . . *continued from page 1*

In response to State ESF-8 mission requests, Katie McDeavitt and Shayne Stewart responded with other DOH assets to perform Healthcare Facility Damage Assessments. The team of about 100 people carried out over 1900 assessments across the state. The team's base of operations



was in Punta Gorda and they spent just over a week deployed. DOH-Okaloosa employees Kat Beedie and Christine Syfrett, along with OWMRC Volunteer RN Kathy Graves, were assigned a mission with other Region 1 DOH members to staff a Special Needs Shelter in Clay County. Kathy, Kat, and Christine spent a week caring for residents of Clay County and even had to open an emergency receiving center at that shelter when the storm caused severe flash flooding in the area. People were quickly evacuated to the Thrasher-Horne Center with little more than what they were wearing, and the shelter staff performed above and beyond to care for the evacuees as well as their special needs clients.

Environmental Health Section Chief Trisha Dall and team members Pam Weeks, Gabrielle Johnson, and Cody Clark responded to Okeechobee and Highlands County to perform assessments on water and sewer systems, check on sanitary conditions at feeding centers and in shelters. They were deployed for almost two weeks. David Brinkley was deployed to Collier County to work at that county's Emergency Operations Center ESF-8 Desk. David assisted with organizing shelter closings and placement of people who were unable to return home due to damage or power issues.

Amanda Coldwell and Sydney Harper were tasked to Highlands County Emergency Operations Center ESF-8 Desk to assist with health and medical needs and resources in that county. Nicole Harris and Helga ValentinDeJesus was assigned a mission to Suwannee County to staff a Special Needs Shelter there.

What about OWMRC involvement? I know many of you had contacted me prior to my deployment asking about deployment outside our area, what is covered, is there compensation, what about time off from regular job, etc. Some of you expressed that you were willing to go, and your name was moved up to the regional staffing person, but unfortunately you were not assigned to a mission.



Many of these missions required state purchasing cards or "P-Cards". We are unable to issue these to volunteers. Other issues did arise that excluded the MRC volunteers, but we did request to have MRC Volunteers added as OPS (Temporary Employment Status). That request was not accepted. We will look

deeper into the use of our MRC volunteers, along with other MRC groups, as a statewide asset as the After Action Report and Improvement Plan is being written for this response. You are an important link in our chain of assistance when we have a local event, and could not do the job as well without your help. We want to see if we can increase the effectiveness of the local MRC as a statewide asset. Since the State Medical Assistance Teams (SMRT) have been reorganized, response actions have been limited in scope. We hope to have better mechanisms in place when this type and scope of disaster strikes our state again.

Stay vigilant, our storm season is not over yet! Keep your hurricane supplies ready, and yourselves prepared for the rest of the 2017 season. We will review our actions and plans and see where we can improve. If we have another "local" storm where we will be activated, we will alert you as to where you can help serve your community.

## Okaloosa-Walton Medical Reserve Corps End of Year Meeting

The OWMRC held its End of Year Meeting on September 23rd at the Health Department in Fort Walton Beach. We had 8 members attend the meeting. The State of the MRC was discussed, along with past and future events, and where we want our organization to go. Awards were presented to the members attending, and others were announced. We continue to have new interest in our MRC, and we discussed how to continue to grow. Our end of year statistics were the best I have seen in our history, with almost 900 hours of volunteered time at a value of over \$35,000. We discussed the current state of our Mission Ready Teams, and introduced a possible Local Epi Response Team (LERT).

We hope we will continue with our excellent numbers, continued opportunities for service and response, grow our Lean On Me Project workforce and visits, and keep all members engaged in our mission. Thanks for your support of the OWMRC, you are a valued member of our team and community!



Clockwise from Top Left:  
**Katherine Kennard** receives her Go-Pack and Deployable Certificate.  
**Terry Eisler** receives his Go-Pack and Deployable Certificate.  
**Linda Epperson** receives her Certificate of Appreciation for Hours Volunteered.  
**Amanda Bower** receives her Certificate of Appreciation for Hours Volunteered.  
**Peggy McDeavitt** receives her Certificate of Appreciation for Hours Volunteered.





## OWMRC Volunteer Kathy Graves

When I transferred my nursing license from Texas to Florida, several years ago, I completed an online form that ended with a simple question – ‘would you be willing to help in a natural or man-made disaster?’ I replied ‘yes’ and that led me to the Okaloosa County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). Over the last few years I have attended classes sponsored by the DOH, taken part in exercises, administered flu shots to students, and met some wonderful people. It is not necessary for one to be a medical professional to join the MRC. There are roles everyone can fill and ways everyone can help. In addition to being a Registered Nurse, I am also a retired Air Force Colonel who understands professionalism and appreciates when I see it.

This past week, I spent six days in a Special Needs Shelter in Clay County, Florida, caring for Hurricane Irma evacuees. Our evacuees and their families needed everything from electricity to power medical equipment to oxygen to medication management to comfort and understanding. We provided services as needed in the shelter and aided our evacuees as they made arrangements to return home. Our team of about 15 provided for the physical and emotional needs of approximately 25 evacuees on a 24 hour basis. Working side by side with DOH professionals from Okaloosa and other Panhandle DOH offices is an experience I will not soon forget.

It did not take long for the group to meld as a team and develop a “family” atmosphere in caring for our evacuees and each other. Smiles never faded and we supported each other and our evacuees. The professionalism I observed from the DOH employees as a whole was impressive. I would deploy with them for any reason or at any time again in the future. The men and women of the DOH left family and home behind to care for Hurricane Irma victims. I would like to thank them for giving me the

opportunity to serve with them and encourage anyone with a desire to help to contact the DOH for information on the MRC. You would be welcomed and appreciated.



## Okaloosa-Walton Medical Reserve Corps LOCAL EPI RESPONSE TEAM (LERT)

On September 23, 2017, Christine Syfrett, the biological terrorism and disease surveillance epidemiologist at Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County, conducted a short presentation to introduce herself to OWMRC members as the Local Epi Response Team, or **LERT**, Program Leader. Christine reviewed basic epidemiological concepts and methods that will be utilized by LERT members and discussed day-to-day tasks of DOH-Okaloosa epidemiologists. Disease reporting was defined and disease tracking computer programs, Merlin and ESSENCE, were discussed during this brief presentation. Information on disease transmission, control measures, disease surveillance, outbreaks, and case definitions were also presented to the OWMRC members in attendance.



So what exactly is LERT? LERT is an exciting group that will assist DOH-Okaloosa epidemiologists in outbreak and medical surge situations. LERT members may help with interviewing or surveying clients, tracing contacts, collecting specimens, educating patients regarding disease process and transmission, and conducting disease surveillance. There may be opportunities for LERT members to deploy on public health missions or provide support for immunization clinics and medication dispensing sites.

We plan to offer monthly trainings and updates for our LERT members. OWMRC members (medical and non-medical) are welcome. There are plenty of opportunities to gain experience in epidemiology during outbreaks or times of public health surges and emergencies and your service would be much needed and appreciated! If you are interested in becoming a LERT member, please contact Christine Syfrett at [Christine.Syfrett@flhealth.gov](mailto:Christine.Syfrett@flhealth.gov).

## Okaloosa-Walton MRC Mission Statement

To engage health care professionals in helping the community prepare for, respond to, and mitigate health and medical emergencies, natural or man-made disaster and other urgent public health needs by providing a group of trained, readily available volunteer professionals to supplement the local health and medical response system.



## Training Website Links

Interested in some additional training? Want something to do when you can't sleep? Want to learn more without having to sit in a classroom? Consider checking out these Training Websites to get your learning on!

SERT TRAC: <https://trac.floridadisaster.org/TRAC/loginform.aspx>

MRC TRAIN: <https://www.mrc.train.org/DesktopShell.aspx>

FEMA: <https://training.fema.gov/>

You will need to register to get access, but it's free. Almost all classes you see are free to attend or take online. All you have to provide is your time! **HAPPY LEARNING!**

Be A Local Hero!

**VOLUNTEER**

**TODAY**

NEW  
PHONE  
NUMBER

**850-344-0575**

Florida Health Alert Network

<https://floridahealthalertnetwork.com/mrcvolunteer>

## Until Help Arrives

**- Take Action in Emergency Situations -**



This is a new program that has taken the place of the Active Bystander Training program. *You Are The Help Until Help Arrives (Until Help Arrives)* is a new program designed to educate and empower the public to take action in emergency situations and provide lifesaving care before professional help arrives. There are three main training tools available as part of the Until Help Arrives program - all available online at <https://ready.gov/untillhelparrives>.

- **Interactive video:** Viewers have the opportunity to make lifesaving decisions for injured amusement park patrons.
- **Web-based training:** A 25-minute, online video tutorial explaining the steps people can take to help someone with life-threatening injuries.
- **Instructor-led curriculum:** Materials, including videos and activities, for a hands-on, instructor-led course covers five topics in depth.

### MRC's Role Promoting Until Help Arrives in Local Communities

The MRC will play a critical role in promoting the Until Help Arrives program and educating the public in communities nationwide. We invite MRC units to share the Until Help Arrives training resources widely within your local networks. After the first of the year, we will be looking at providing the training for instructors here for our OWMRC and our communities. Stay tuned to your email for announcements from the OWMRC leadership for this great opportunity to serve your fellow citizens!

### OWMRC Interest Form

Name (Last) (First) (Middle)

Mailing Address City State Zip

Work Telephone / Home Telephone / Cell Phone

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

What type of volunteer position are you interested in? \_\_\_\_\_

List any professional license, registration, or certificate you currently possess (include certificate/license number):

List any special skills, interests, or hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

List any special considerations or needs: \_\_\_\_\_

List your most recent volunteer or employment experience: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about the OWMRC? \_\_\_\_\_

Scan and email this form to OWMRC Team Leader Shayne Stewart at [Shayne.Stewart@flhealth.gov](mailto:Shayne.Stewart@flhealth.gov)

or mail to: Shayne Stewart  
OWMRC Team Leader  
221 Hospital Drive, NE  
Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32548

