

SERV-OR Bulletin

Issue 9: Challenging Times, Light on the Horizon

November 30, 2020

In Remembrance of Christene Gross **NEW**

By Sophie Miller-DeSart



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It is with deep sadness in our hearts, that we acknowledge the life and light of a SERV-OR volunteer who has recently passed. Christene Gross, OD, joined SERV-OR in 2014. In her six years as a member of the Multnomah County MRC and the State Managed Volunteer Pool, her commitment to public health preparedness and her undeniable effervescence was known by so many of us. Christene was the type of volunteer whose list of training credentials spilled off the pages, her hand would be first in the air when looking for a team leader, and through tough drills and tests of competence, she'd have her teammates smiling their way through it, together. Sharp as a tack, Christene's initiative and positive attitude must have been what made everything she did look easy. Her compassion and kindness were always on display, reflecting the true spirit of volunteerism with every encounter. May Christene, and others who have been taken from us too soon, rest in peace.

Current Volunteer Opportunities

Looking for volunteer opportunities in your area? Complete the interest forms for additional information:

Testing Event interest form

OHA Testing Unit Logistics Support interest form

Once you have taken a survey, SERV-OR will verify your healthcare credentials and send you a screening survey that will put you on the list to hear about opportunities in your area.

Warm Springs SERV-OR Assignment, October 2020 **NEW**

Written by Jeff Rubin, PhD, NREMT

In early October I responded to a SERV-OR request in support of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs' COVID-19 operations. They have incorporated outdoor screening and limited primary care at their community health center (CHC) since February, so they've had to deal with a range of challenging conditions, including snow, heat, smoke, limited resources, and a temperature spread >90°F. When much of Oregon was struggling with air quality indices in the 300-500 range, the bowl that hosts Warm Springs was at 500-800, which meant high-level respiratory protection regardless of patient presence and minimizing time outdoors.

People who had or sought a medical or dental appointment at the CHC, or just wanted a test, could drive or walk up, starting with check-in and fever screening. Next stop was the station where I worked (Orange Tent), where we checked oral temperature, pulse, and oxygen saturation. A physician or nurse practitioner did an initial assessment and had the option of dispensing a few common medications and further referral as needed. We then performed COVID-19, strep, respiratory syncytial virus, and/or flu tests. Indian Health Service and CHC staff had a well-adapted system in place, focusing on provider safety. I started my assignment with a fit-test for the N-95 I'd be wearing, along with face shield, gloves, and gowns for patient contact. We used cloth or procedure masks plus distance for times between patients. Days started chilly and ended hot.

I appreciated the system layout, attention to safety, staff patience with me as I learned their procedures (including performing strep tests, which is not a standard EMS skill), and the laid-back professional atmosphere. I'd go back.

Yamhill County MRC **NEW**

Written by Renee Menkens

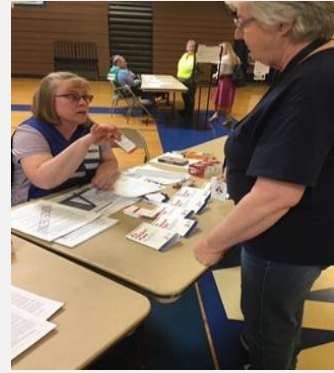
Yamhill County is nestled between the forested hills of the Coast Range and low-lying farmlands of the Willamette Valley. In this setting, the Yamhill County MRC trains for potential disasters including forest fires, earthquakes, flooding, and pandemics. Valley flooding forms "islands" as bridges and roads are washed away. Forest fires cause urgent evacuations. Such potential disasters require thoughtful training of volunteers. The unit focuses on mass casualty and medical response planning. Members train regularly and maintain a heightened state of readiness.

Established in 2006, the Yamhill County MRC currently has over 120 volunteers. MRC members include EMT's, paramedics, nurses, and other professionals. The volunteers supply surge personnel for local hospitals and health departments. They also participate in community exercises involving shelters, prophylaxis and vaccination clinics, emergency response, and County Public Health events.

In the spring of 2019, the Yamhill County MRC participated in the Portland Area Capabilities Exercise (PACE 2019). This was part of the state's Operation OX where training involved a simulated intentional release of plague at a major venue in Portland. In this simulation, the MRC served as a point of distribution (POD) requesting, receiving, distributing, and dispensing medicines and supplies from the Federal Strategic National Stockpile. As well, the MRC gave "advice support" in implementing the POD. More recently, the Yamhill County MRC worked closely with their local Community Emergency Response Team and Search

and Rescue Unit providing a drive-up distribution center giving away N-95 masks to the public. They gave away some 15,000 masks to the community in response to the COVID pandemic.

Having these dedicated volunteers within the county's MRC helps make Yamhill County (and Oregon) safer with well-trained volunteers ready for any disaster!



MRC volunteers in action during the PACE 2019 exercise, 2019.
(note: these photos were taken pre-COVID, hence, no masks)

Online Training Modules, Technical Assistance, and Toolkits

Find training opportunities at this [new link](#) here which will be updated regularly. Please continue to check it throughout the month!

You can also visit the [SERV-OR Trainings page](#) for links to the foundational training series for Disaster Medicine and Public Health Core Competencies, FEMA Incident Command courses, and more!

Job Opportunities Updated

- AmeriCorps: AmeriCorps NCCC FEMA Corps Team Leader – Winter 2021 #SDL2019-2048 (Veneta), multiple positions (Harrisburg, Waldport, Reedsport, etc.). (posted 10/21, no closing date listed) [AmeriCorps Application Portal](#)
- **CDC Foundation** currently has two COVID-related open positions in Oregon--a Tribal Nation Case Manager and Tribal Nation Workforce Development Trainer. (No closing date listed, both positions have been posted for 30+days).
- **Samaritan Health Services** in Corvallis has an opening for an Emergency Management Coordinator (Posted 9/14, no closing date listed)
- **Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital** is looking for a temporary COVID entrance screener. (Job posted 9/10, no closing date listed)
- RDPO Weekly Update contains information on current job openings. <https://rdpo.net/weekly-update> (Application closing dates vary depending on week)
- **Oregon Health Authority State and County jobs** (Dates vary by position)
- Benton County (Corvallis) COVID-19 Emergency Response **Temporary Case Investigator** (Posted 11/2, no closing date listed)

- DHS (Salem) **Operations & Policy Analyst 4/Tribal Emergency Coordinator**, etc. (Posted 11/6 and Closing 12/14)
- **Armed Emergency Response Officer**, Oregon (Posted 11/6, no closing date listed)
- **Regional Emergency Coordinator Regions 3 and 5 (Operations & Policy Analyst 3) Lane, Coos, Douglas, Curry, Josephine, and Jackson counties**, OHA, Health Security, Preparedness and Response Program
- **Operations Manager, US Programs** (No close date listed), Medical Teams International

Planning for the COVID-19 Vaccine **NEW**

The nation's eyes and ears are turning to the rapid development of COVID-19 vaccines that may change the face of this pandemic for the better. In this extraordinary landscape, we find ourselves in a critical time to address people's understanding of vaccine development and distribution. In the coming weeks and months, Oregon will be working with state agencies such as the Oregon Department of Education, hospitals and health systems, local public health authorities, and community and faith-based organizations to educate and inform Oregonians on the safe and strategic distribution of the COVID-19 Vaccine, when it is available. **Please stay tuned on how SERV-OR volunteers may be able to help.**

Deployment Survey Coming Soon **NEW**

Have you been deployed for a COVID-19 response mission? We want to hear from you! In December, a COVID-19 mid-action review survey will be sent to active volunteers in SERV-OR. If you did not deploy and you receive this survey, you are still invited to complete a smaller set of questions. If you did deploy in-person, or remotely, your participation contributes to improving SERV-OR, not only for OHA and local health departments, but for you - the volunteers!

Flu Shot Reminder

A reminder that the CDC and OHA recommend we all receive the seasonal flu vaccine, which is widely available. As usual, vaccinations are recommended and are particularly important for avoiding dual flu-COVID infections. Full information, including the Vaccine Finder tool, is available at **OHA's Flu Prevention Portal**

SERV-OR Trivia Questions Related to Fire **Updated**

Provided by Jeff Rubin

- 1) This September's fires generated the worst disaster in Oregon's history. What was the worst wildfire, in terms of lives lost, in US history? Also, name that region's worst disaster ever?
- 2) In the USA, what is the approximate ratio of human-caused vs lightning-caused wildfires?
- 3) Where can you find the latest on fire weather conditions and warnings?

Holiday meal safety

This year gathering for meals with people outside your immediate household is not recommended. If someone who doesn't live with you attends, the following tips are provided to keep your family safe during holiday mealtimes.

- Enjoy a meal with members of your immediate household
- Instead of family or buffet style dining, try preparing individual food plates so there's no sharing of utensils
- While gathering with people from outside your household, always wear your face covering
- Only remove your face covering to eat
- Be sure everyone washes their hands thoroughly and dries them before and after eating
- Wash your hands thoroughly and dry them after sneezing and blowing your nose



[Click here](#) for more COVID resources for Providers and Health professionals.

SERV-OR Mission

The mission of the State Emergency Registry of Volunteers in Oregon (SERV-OR) and Oregon's MRC network is to ensure health and wellbeing, educate, and protect all people in Oregon by recruiting, registering, training, exercising, and deploying licensed volunteer health professionals to support local, tribal, and statewide public health initiatives, health and medical needs during public health crises, and to improve access to preparedness education and resources for all individuals and communities.

SERV-OR Trivia Answers Related to Fire **Updated**

- 1) **Peshtigo**, WI, 1871 is still first in the nation for deadliest wildfire; along with the Chicago Fire, which occurred at the same time, it's why Fire Prevention Week is in the second month of October.
- 2) **4:1** – note how it's almost the opposite in the SW US.
- 3) **National Weather Service Fire Weather Page** – note that the website will be changing.

Contributors to this bulletin include Paul Kaplan, Dan Hughson, Renee Menkens, Jeff Rubin, Carmen Ionescu, Jordana Leeb, and Sophie Miller-DeSart