



# IACH Informer

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## Mass Casualty Exercise

by Jan Clark



Members of the Hazardous Chemical Team execute decontamination procedures on a patient experiencing symptoms from an unknown chemical agent released at the Kansas State University football stadium.

At 9:10 a.m. on June 1<sup>st</sup> Irwin Army Community Hospital was notified by Riley County Officials of a possible release of a chemical agent. The mass casualty exercise, with participants from Riley, Geary and Pottawatomie counties began at the Kansas State University football stadium.

For the purpose of the exercise, in excess of 40 individuals played patient. While the majority of those remained in Manhattan or were dispersed to Geary County or Wamego hospitals, where they were immediately treated by decontamination and triaged, the remaining 12, all Soldiers, drove themselves to IACH to seek care. The simulated effects of the chemicals were difficulty breathing, runny nose, vision problems, stomach cramps and nausea.

Once the Soldiers arrived decontamination procedures began. Explains 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Kelly Tatara, Chief, Environmental Health, "Decontamination is the physical process of removing harmful substances from contaminated personnel, supplies and equipment. It

should be performed whenever there is a known or suspected contamination with a hazardous substance. This is done for the safety of the person contaminated and the people and environment that surrounds him or her.

The patient is isolated, undresses and enters a shower where he washes with soap or water. Times vary depending on the chemical. The patient then receives medical attention as needed. Wearing full body suits and masks the decontamination team works to ensure patient and fellow team member safety and security throughout the exercise."

The exercise, a first for the area was geared to improving emergency procedures for all parties involved and the interaction between them. In an interview with Channel 49 News, Topeka, Col. Marilyn Brooks, Hospital Commander stated, "We need to keep exercising internal, as well as community emergency procedures. Since Katrina, and the awareness that disaster brought, we are reminded that preparation is the key. Sometimes we have to set aside normal rules to make things happen.

The daily collaboration we have with the Riley and Geary county emergency respondents and hospitals is enhanced in scenarios such as this. We're spotting areas where improvement is needed. That can only be a positive lesson for all involved."

The full scope exercise included triaging patients following decontamination. Those patients displaying severe symptoms were processed and admitted. The paper trail was completed as if this were a real occurrence, so all aspects of the exercised mimicked a "real life" event.

At the events conclusion an after action report was completed. Homeland Security personnel, on hand throughout the event and IACH staff members met for review. While issues of timeliness could be improved the overall consensus was communications between the agencies was good. Lessons learned will benefit all participants.

### *Nurse Advice Line*

The Irwin Army Community Hospital Nurse Advise Line hours of operation are as follows: Mondays—Fridays, 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Saturdays, Sundays and federal holidays the hours are 9:00 .am. to 5:00 p.m.

***Irwin Army Community Hospital has optometry appointments available for family members and retirees. To schedule an appointment call 239-DOCS (3627).***

## ***Measles and Traveling To or Through Germany***

by Pete Wiemers  
Public Health Nurse

The Pan American Health Organization recently announced a measles outbreak in Germany. Over 1,100 cases have been detected since January of this year. Their recommendation is for all persons going to Germany to be fully immunized against measles with the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccination. All Soldiers and family members traveling to or through Germany should be fully immunized. Those with exemptions to measles immunizations should be advised to avoid travel to this area. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendation is that adult travelers have 2 doses of live measles virus vaccine with laboratory proof of immunity (titers). For children, the first dose should be given on or after the child's first birthday, and the second dose no earlier than one month after the first; for infants 6-11 months one dose of the MMR prior to departure. The MMR vaccine prevents measles and two other viral diseases — mumps and rubella. These three vaccines are safely given together. MMR is an attenuated (weakened) live virus vaccine. This means that after injection, the viruses grows, and causes a harmless infection in the vaccinated person with very few, if any symptoms. The person's immune system fights the infection caused by these weakened viruses and immunity develops which lasts throughout that person's life.

Measles is an infectious viral disease that begins with a fever that lasts for a couple of days, often followed by a cough, runny nose and conjunctivitis (pink eye). A rash starts on the face and upper neck, spreads down the back and trunk, then extends to the arms and hands, as well as the legs and feet. After about five days, the rash fades in the same order it appeared.

Measles is highly contagious. Infected people are usually contagious from about 4 days before their rash starts to 4 days afterwards. The measles virus resides in the mucus in the nose and throat of infected people. When they sneeze or cough, droplets spray into the air and the droplets remain active and contagious on infected surfaces for up to two hours.

Measles itself is unpleasant, but the complications can be dangerous. Six to twenty percent of the people who get the disease will get an ear infection, diarrhea or possibly pneumonia. One out of 1,000 people with measles will develop inflammation of the brain, and about one out of 1000 will die.

Before the measles vaccine became available, there were approximately 450,000 measles cases and an average of 450 measles-associated deaths reported each year. Widespread use of measles vaccine has led to a greater than 99 per cent reduction in measles cases in the United States. However, measles is common in other countries where it spreads rapidly and can be easily brought into the U.S. If vaccinations were stopped, measles would return to pre-vaccine levels in the U.S. and hundreds of people would die from measles-related illnesses.

We still see measles among visitors to the U.S. and among U.S. travelers returning from other countries. The measles viruses these travelers bring into our country have been known to cause outbreaks. However, because most people in the U.S. have been vaccinated, these outbreaks are most often small.

For more information on this topic please go to [www.paho.org](http://www.paho.org) or call Preventive Medicine Services at 239-7323.

***Irwin Army Community Hospital  
has a 24-hour number  
dedicated for patients to call  
in and cancel appointments.  
Please call 785-239-8428.***



***Be a part of  
the Solution!***

***Know your  
Rights and Responsibilities!***

***Pharmacy News . . . In order to better serve our customers, the  
Outpatient Pharmacy new ours of operation are 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.,  
Monday through Friday (except holidays).***

## ***We've Said It Before—But We REALLY Need to Say It Again! A Continuing Problem—”No Shows”***

by Christopher Lowery  
Chief, Customer Service

I have heard it said that if you No-Show, or miss your medical appointment at Irwin Army Community Hospital it's no big deal. Well, I have to tell you that even though you may not be charged a fee for missing your appointment you do pay for it in the end. Your Customer Service Division at Irwin has tracked and verified that historically the greatest concern from our patients is that of *Access to Care*, or the ability to make an appointment.

Very little is as frustrating as to need an appointment and to be told that there are none available. Did you know that on average **one thousand appointments** are missed every month? At twenty minutes per appointment we're talking 13.8 days of lost appointments; and those are 24 hour days! Doesn't that make you angry? Your access to care is lessened because of these no shows. So what can you do to help? It's really easy. If you can't make your appointment just call 239-DOCS or 239-7000 and let one of the clerks know. Not only will you be keeping yourself from being a No-Go, but you'll be helping your fellow patients with attaining appointments they genuinely need.

On another note, in speaking with CPT Jerry Silvers, DENTAC Executive Officer, he reports "an average of 167 dental appointments missed each month. That's nearly 21 days with one of our dentists sitting around twiddling his thumbs while those who need an appointment can't get one. Should you be unable to make your appointment please call the following numbers as they apply: Dental Clinic #1, 239-7955; Dental Clinic #3, 239-239-4261; and Dental Clinic #4, 239-4174." Don't be a NO-GO - Don't NO-SHOW!

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### ***Men's Health***—by Pete Wiemers, Public Health Nurse

There is an ongoing, increasing, and predominately silent crisis in the health and well-being of men. According to the Men's Health Line Network, many men are reluctant to visit their doctors for routine check-ups for a variety of reasons, including embarrassment of discussing health issues, fear, and lack of knowledge and information about their health and bodies. This is illustrated by government statistics which show that men visit the doctor 150 million times less frequently than women per year. And, a high percentage of the physician visits made by men are for injuries suffered on the job, at home, or at play, reflecting the more dangerous nature of men's work and recreational activities. Unfortunately, these "emergency room" type visits do not result in comprehensive health examinations nor are they conducive to the kind of health care discussions so necessary between physician and patient.

Compared with women, men are less knowledgeable about health, less physically active during ages 35-54, less likely to use sunscreen, twice as likely to die of skin cancer, three times as likely to be alcoholics, suffer heart attacks 10 years earlier, are five times more likely to commit suicide, nine times more likely to die as the result of a job related injury, and die 7 years earlier. Additionally, when men do seek medical assistance, they are more likely to cancel follow-up appointments, more likely to play down the severity of symptoms, and less likely to finish their prescriptions. Prevention and early detection seem to be the keys to good health and high survival rates.

Prostate and testicular cancer survival rates are a good example. Early detection of prostate cancer is critical to the preservation of life and health care strategies for those at risk of prostate cancer. Additionally, there is an 87 percent survival rate for testicular cancer if detected early. One in five men will develop prostate cancer in their lifetime; with over 32,000 dying from the disease each year. Prostate cancer occurs 50 percent more often in African-American men than in white men. African-American men in the United States have the highest incidence in the world of prostate cancer, with only a 63 percent survival rate. Another disease specific to men is testicular cancer; one of the most common cancers in men aged 15- 34. Men are at higher risk for a number of other cancers, such as melanoma, leukemia and cancers of the lung, bladder and kidney.

National Men's Health Week is celebrated each year as the week leading up to and including Father's Day. Passed by Congress, this week is recognition that men's health needs impact not only the man but his family and friends as well. For more information contact the Nurse Advice Line at 239-DOCS, the Preventive Medicine Services at 239-7323 or your primary care clinic.

Our ***Physical Therapy Clinic Patient Education Webpage*** at <http://iach.amedd.army.mil/departments/phyTherapy.asp> offers education on the following: common musculoskeletal conditions, foot/ankle, low back, elbow, hand and wrist, hip, knee, leg, neck, shoulder and miscellaneous such as: bursitis, contusion, diabetes and exercise, exercise and weight loss, muscle strain, pregnancy and exercise and a walk-top-jog progression program. "It is our hope that both health care providers and patients alike will benefit tremendously from the information that we've put together on this webpage."

**For appointments call (785) 239-DOCS (3627) or 1-888-239-DOCS (3627)  
Visit [TRICAREonline.com](http://TRICAREonline.com) for patient information/Fort Riley website/Services/Medical, Health for  
IACH Intranet Information**

## Preventive Medicine . . .

A variety of services/classes are available:

- Tobacco Cessation
- Self Care
- Child Health Assessments for CYS programs.
- Health Promotion and Wellness/Healthy Lifestyle
- STD/HIV
- Classes are also available to units upon request.
- Field Hygiene
- Food Handlers

For information or to enroll in a class or schedule an appointment please call Community Health Nursing At 239-7323.

## Summer Foot Care

by Dr. Richard Ellison  
Podiatrist

Summer conditions and activities, while enjoyable, can be hazardous to your feet. Some tips to keep your feet healthy include:

- Avoid going barefoot, especially if you are diabetic or have a loss of sensation in your feet. You may not be aware of a puncture wound caused by objects, such as glass or nails which could develop into a serious infection. Going barefoot also exposes your feet to viruses and warts.
- While you should avoid going barefoot, some foot problems can be attributed to shoe gear. A common danger of wearing sandals is cracked skin on the heels of your feet. This condition can be treated and resolved in 2 to 3 days by coating the heels with Vaseline and covering them with a plastic wrap and socks while you sleep.
- If you're going to wear sandals, alternate them with closed toe shoe gear. Sandals may be fine at the beach or around the locker room, but don't wear them while on an extended walking excursion such as shopping or at a theme park. Wear shoes appropriate for the activity.
- When wearing sandals use a sport sandal not flip flops, which has a thong in between the toes. Flip flops can cause heel pain, serious blisters, corns and calluses.
- Corns and calluses should be treated with a pumice stone after a shower or bath. Avoid using a sharp instrument to shave these thick areas of skin.
- Protect the skin on your feet by changing athletic shoes daily to allow them to dry out. This requires at least 24 hours. Powder your feet and wear socks made of acrylic fiber. Use sunscreen to protect the exposed skin on top of your feet. Trim toenails straight across, not curved.

Remember to inspect your feet daily and enjoy the summer!

Should you have questions about proper foot care or treatment, you may call Irwin Army Community Hospital's Nurse Advice Line at 239-DOCS (3627).

*"The dreams of people may differ, but everyone wants their dreams to come true. Not everybody aspires to be a bank president or a nuclear scientist, but everybody wants to do something with one's life that will give him or her pride and a sense of accomplishment. And America, above all places, gives us the freedom to do that, that freedom to reach out and make our dreams come true."*

- Ronald Regan

## Community Efforts . . .

- Happy/Adventure Meals/etc.: We need your help! We are collecting the little toys in the fast food chains' kid meals. They are being passed on to the local Crisis Center. We have found that often children are forced to abandon their homes and are unable to take along any of their own toys. These kid meal toys are perfect—small enough for a child to put in his/her pocket, and giving that child something again of their own. This small contribution costs us nothing and could mean so much. Won't you join us in this campaign? (Call Jan Clark, Public Affairs Officer, 239-7250).
- Pull for the House Pop Tab Recycling Program. Here again is an opportunity to extend a helping hand to others less fortunate. Turn saved pop tabs in to Jan Clark, PAO, 1st floor, room 1-N-7.
- Any other ideas for community support, just call 239-7250. Thanks in advance for your support!

## We Ask Your Assistance!!!

In order to make this newsletter an excellent means of reaching you, our patient, we need your assistance. Are we currently supplying you, via this newsletter, information you want to know? How can we improve? What information would you like to find here?

If you've read this newsletter let us know. If you have ideas, questions, concerns, let us know. Email editor Jan Clark at [jan.clark@us.army.mil](mailto:jan.clark@us.army.mil). Help us make this means of communication one that meets your needs. In advance, thank you!

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