



Kiowa County Health Department

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**Contact:** James Fields, Health Educator

## **Volunteers Being Sought for Oklahoma Medical Reserve Corps**

Disasters can strike anywhere at any time. Whether it's a natural disaster such as a tornado, or a man-made terrorist attack, there is a need for volunteers to respond to all hazards, as well as to provide public health support throughout the year. It is for that reason that the Oklahoma Medical Reserve Corps (OKMRC) was established.

The OKMRC, Oklahoma's only medical and public health volunteer program, is directed by the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH). It is a statewide system comprised of county units and specialty teams, typically operating under the authority of local county health departments. The program's main objective is establishing a system to identify, train and organize medical and public health professionals, as well as community volunteers to supplement and support on-going emergency response systems and personnel.

Lezlie Carter is the state OKMRC coordinator who oversees the administrative process and ensures volunteers have proper credentials and training for their volunteer assignment.

"Oklahomans are known for their ability to come together and assist others in times of tragedy," said Carter. "OKMRC provides the opportunity for people to offer their services in a coordinated and effective manner. We encourage anyone who is interested to join before disaster hits, so they are pre-identified and trained as a credentialed volunteer who is ready to respond."

Currently, there are more than 5,000 OKMRC members throughout the state. Many are volunteers who are practicing or retired medical professionals such as doctors, nurses, emergency medical technicians, pharmacists, hospital-based workers, nurse assistants, veterinarians, dentists and others with health/medical training. However, it's not a requirement for a volunteer to have a medical background. Community citizens without medical training can assist the primary health teams with administrative assistance, communications, record keeping and other support functions.

OKMRC units share the common goals of:

- Creating teams of volunteer medical, public health, and lay professionals to help during emergencies and disasters.
- Offering education and prevention to improve the public health of neighborhoods and communities.

Upon entering the program, volunteers have training opportunities about a community's emergency procedures, trauma response techniques, use of specialized equipment and other information.

For more information about the organization or to become a volunteer, contact Carter at (405) 271-0900 or visit the website at [www.okmrc.org](http://www.okmrc.org).

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