

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

November 30, 2012

Contact: Steve Todd, Health Officer

517-279-9561, ext. 148

James Cook, Emergency Preparedness Coord.

517-279-9561, ext. 120

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Be Prepared To Be There!

Coldwater, MI. Though Hurricane Sandy has come and gone, the devastation from this horrific storm is still being experienced by many families who live on the east coast. And as many of us in Michigan view the destruction that was left behind, we can't help but wonder "What if?" What if there was a disaster in our community? What if our homes or neighborhoods were destroyed? What would we do?

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency, along with other local Health Departments located in Allegan, Berrien, Barry, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo and Van Buren counties (Emergency Preparedness Region V), have been working on that very question – what to do in the event of a mass catastrophe or a public health emergency in Southwest Michigan. For several years, the 5th District Medical Response Coalition (a group of hospital personnel, health care providers, local public health practitioners and emergency management staff from Southwest Michigan) have been meeting and planning for just such events. Plans have been formed, strategies have been identified, exercises have been conducted and now we need you - local community residents interested in serving as volunteers who are willing to be trained and deployed if and when a disaster strikes.

To learn more about how to become a **public health volunteer**, please attend a free training on:

5th District Medical Response Coalition - Volunteer Reception

December 11, 2012

11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Lawrence Education Center, Borgess Hospital,

1501 Gull Road,

Kalamazoo, Michigan

(more)

This introductory training will provide specific information about Emergency Preparedness Region V and the 5th District Medical Response Coalition. In addition, participants will learn about the **MI Volunteer Registry** and how it can be used to notify and deploy volunteers in the event of a public health emergency or mass catastrophe.

If you can't make this training, and would still like to sign up to be a MI Volunteer, you can register at any time by going to <https://mivolunteerregistry.org/> and completing the registration form. Or to learn more about public health volunteering opportunities, you can call the health department's emergency preparedness coordinator at **(517) 279-9561, ext. 120**. To learn more about how to prepare yourself and your family in the event of an emergency, please see our website at www.bhsj.org and click on the Emergency Preparedness button. **Remember: If a disaster strikes, volunteers will be needed, so be prepared to be there!**

###