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PRESS RELEASE

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Campus Medical Reserve Corps unit wins equipment grant

AMHERST, Mass. – The UMass Amherst Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) unit will receive more than \$2,700 in supplies and equipment, through a grant from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA).

The items range from an automatic external defibrillator training unit to rolls of tape – all essential to the MRC's mission of responding to public health emergencies. Unit director Ann Becker, R.N. identified a 'wish list' of materials as part of the application process; the items she selected will be purchased by MEMA and delivered to the group's headquarters at University Health Services (UHS).

MEMA coordinated the competitive grant on behalf of the federal Citizen Corps, the MRC's parent agency; other groups under the Citizen Corps umbrella, including Volunteers in Public Service and Neighborhood Watch, were also eligible. Winning applicants were selected based on an evaluation of their mission, objectives and the award's benefit to the community.

The UMass Amherst MRC was co-founded in 2005 by UHS and the School of Nursing, and currently boasts more than 300 members. It's the country's first curriculum-incorporated unit, with undergraduate and second bachelor's degree nursing students taking part.

The group has coordinated several major preparedness drills; the most recent, April 12, 2007 at the Mullins Center, simulated a large-scale bacterial meningitis outbreak. Campus, regional and state officials assessed public health emergency communications systems and analyzed the effectiveness of emergency dispensing site operations.

For information about the UMass Amherst MRC or to volunteer, contact Ann Becker, R.N., UMass Amherst MRC unit director, (413) 577-5193 or e-mail umassmrc@uhs.umass.edu.