



Media Alert

For Immediate Release

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Emergency drill tests campus, community readiness

WHAT: UMass Amherst's Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Emergency Management office are conducting an **emergency drill** to enhance skills and readiness for mass care, decontamination and sheltering. The event will simulate the public health response to an accidental ammonia discharge on the university campus.

WHO: More than 300 volunteers are expected to participate, including MRC members; University Health Services (UHS) medical and mental health staff; representatives from the campus' Environmental Health and Safety, transit and police departments; School of Nursing students and faculty; student emergency medical technicians; and members of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). Community partners include the Amherst Fire Department, American Red Cross, Hampshire County MRC, Amherst College and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

WHEN: **Thursday, April 16, 10 a.m. – noon.**

WHERE: Interior and exterior locations at the **Mullins Center**, 200 Commonwealth Avenue, on the UMass Amherst campus.

WHY: Threats including pandemic, bioterrorism and natural disasters are heightening awareness of emergency preparedness. In 2002, the federal government launched the MRC program, through which volunteers respond to public health emergencies, receive emergency preparedness training and support local public health initiatives. The UMass Amherst MRC, founded by in 2005 by UHS and the university's School of Nursing, is the country's first curriculum-incorporated unit.

WHAT ELSE: The drill is funded through an \$11,500 grant from the Western Massachusetts Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council. The UMass Amherst MRC and Emergency Management office co-wrote a proposal for the competitive grant, receiving the award early in 2009.

INTERVIEW

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Ann Becker, R.N., B.S.N., UMass Amherst MRC unit coordinator
- Brian Olsen, UMass Amherst emergency manager

PHOTO

OPPORTUNITIES: Decontamination, patient triage, medical care, psychological first aid and sheltering activities.