American Red Cross
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Together, we can save a life
www. semredcross.org

House Health Policy and Agriculture
Joint Committee Meeting
February 6, 2006

American Red Cross
Represented by the
Southeastern Michigan Chapter
100 Mack
P.O. Box 44110
Detroit, MI 48244-0110

The American Red Cross is the federally designated non-governmental organization to provide disaster relief. This designation is noted in our 1905 federal charter, the result of a congressional action. The American Red Cross is a privately funded federal instrumentality.

The American Red Cross is a Support Agency to Health and Human Services in the National Response Plan (NRP) under provisos of Emergency Support Function (ESF) #8, Public Health and Medical Services, with specific responsibilities to provide support when requested. The Red Cross is also the Primary Agency for Mass Care in the NRP under ESF #6, Mass Care, Housing and Human Services. In this capacity, the Red Cross is responsible for coordination of federal assets in support of overwhelmed state and local entities. The Red Cross has responsibility for coordination of services in cooperation with federal partners rather than provision of services at the national level.

It might be insightful to review how the American Red Cross in Michigan and specifically in Southeastern Michigan responded to last fall's hurricanes. The Red Cross serviced 2,250 cases of hurricane evacuees with about 5,625 people arriving in Michigan. This movement of people is highly atypical to most of the disasters we service. We have learned that each disaster is unique in its details though standard in principles. As a result of this influx we established an operations center in Detroit where we serviced approximately 2,200 evacuees just as a center in Louisiana would have done. Working with local and state agencies, faith based organizations and others like the United Way we helped guide these individuals through the system and into local housing.

To help respond to the demands of this huge operation, the American Red Cross engaged in a program to train 40,000 new volunteers nationally. In Michigan the Red Cross has recruited and trained 3,369 new volunteers. For background, Michigan had 766 trained disaster volunteers prior to Katrina. Our new total of 4,135 trained volunteers helps make Michigan better prepared for local incidents. Additionally, the Red Cross raised $23 million in Michigan to support the state and national response effort. The total national need for this response is about $2.3 billion.

While the recent hurricanes captured the nation's attention, American Red Cross Chapters across Michigan are continually preparing for local situations. For example, here in the Detroit area we are regularly involved in activities such as the International Auto Show, the Detroit/Windsor fireworks and of course yesterday's Super Bowl XL. We continue testing our operations through the use of various types of mock disasters and work with our local, state and federal partners. Locally we sit in the Detroit Emergency Operations Center, we are a member of the 2 South Bioterrorism Committee, the Anti-Terrorism Task Force, the Joint Committee on Bioterrorism Preparedness with the Canadian Red Cross, and a member of the Detroit, Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne Local Emergency Planning Committees.

With regard to Pandemic Influenza, the American National Red Cross Response and Preparedness Department is in the midst of ongoing planning. The Red Cross will remain flexible in order to meet the needs of local communities and our activities and responsibilities will change based on current knowledge.

Based on our current information the American Red Cross will offer to engage in the following activities/responsibilities:

- The Red Cross will actively engage in planning, training and exercises with local and state emergency management and health authorities and offer expertise and support.
- The Red Cross, as a trusted source of emergency information, will disseminate public messages from appropriate government sources about the nature and impact of a biological even, preparedness measures, safety precautions and recommended actions, as well as provide sources of assistance.
- In line with both our established role and our role in the National Response Plan, the Red Cross will offer communities feeding support and assistance with delivering other needed supplies to homebound persons. At the request of public health authorities, this could include a variety of medical resources or involve logistical support to public health activities.
- As with other traumatic events, we will provide limited mental health services for clients and workers in collaboration with local mental health authorities.
- Due to the ability to mobilize and coordinate volunteers, the Red Cross may recruit , mobilize and provide health and mental health professionals to work for other agencies in support of and under the direction of local public health officials engaged in combating the spread and effects of a public health emergency.
- As the provider of a significant portion of the nation's blood supply, the Red Cross will act to ensure the safety of this supply and ensure adequate resources are available to support the medical system.

Activities/responsibilities Red Cross will not agree to engage in/assume, include but are not limited to the following:

- Establish congregate care facilities against the advice of local authorities or where such facilities would enhance the likelihood of disease transmission.
- Manage or assume responsibility for medical facilities, special needs shelters and temporary infirmaries or overflow facilities for hospitals.
- Purchase vaccines or medical supplies for use by public authorities.
- Violate worker safety guidelines published by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. (OSHA).
- Replace lost wages or assume responsibilities for needs arising from economic disruption.
- Assume responsibility for patient tracking. Formal patient tracking is typically conducted by medical care providers. During Welfare Information activities, the Red Cross is a consumer, not a producer, of such information.
- Death notification.

The American Red Cross is committed to ensuring the preparedness of our local units and the public we serve to meet the challenges this event might someday present. We will continue to prepare ourselves as we urge citizens to prepare themselves, especially to prepare their homes as a shelter. For most emergencies we recommend that people have the ability to shelter themselves for up to 3 days, this event might require an even longer time. Please help us get this message out.

Thank you for your time.

Jerry Huey
Chief Operating Officer
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