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Hale Borealis Forum on emergency response showcases innovative programs, world-renowned speakers

Conference also provides free flu, Tdap vaccines to the public

ANCHORAGE — National Preparedness Month will culminate as Alaska health care leaders and emergency preparedness professionals will gather in Anchorage Sept. 27–30 to discuss health and emergency medical preparedness as part of the Hale Borealis Forum. Hosted by the Alaska Division of Public Health, Emergency Programs, the four-day conference expects to draw more than 300 attendees.

Focusing on evidence-based practices, current trends, standards of care, and the latest innovations in emergency response and medical care, attendees will participate in a broad range of topics. Speakers include Kyoung Jun Song, M.D., associate professor, Department of Emergency Medicine, Seoul National University College of Medicine; Kevin Gerold, senior medical officer for Law Enforcement Medicine at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine; and Rick Mathews, director, National Center for Security & Preparedness. These speakers will share lessons learned during responses to the South Korean MV Sewol ferry sinking in 2014. Additional topics include the incorporation of EMS system improvements for mass casualty incidents, how law enforcement and medical personnel collaborate at a scene, as well as Tactical Emergency Medical Support Standards and Practices.

“This conference is the perfect opportunity for our local, state, federal and other preparedness partners to meet together and receive hands-on training of the most current information and techniques on programs and plans that will optimize continued care for patients in Alaska in case of an emergency,” said Merry Carlson, the Section Chief for the Public Health Section of Emergency Programs.

The Hale Borealis Forum highlights the Section of Emergency Program’s continued commitment to include new partners and roles for the benefit of Alaska’s public health and medical emergency preparedness community. This year’s theme, “Alaskan Partnerships Securing and Providing Health and Medical Care Before, During and After a Disaster,” builds upon previous conference topics and the collective experiences with the Alaska Shield/Hale Borealis full-scale exercise that occurred in March 2014.

In addition to the conference, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services and Municipality of Anchorage Department of Health and Human Services staff have partnered to give out 400 free seasonal flu shots and Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) vaccinations on a first-come, first-serve basis. The free clinic is on Saturday Sept. 27 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the downtown Anchorage Hilton. Identification is required to receive the vaccinations and people are encouraged to bring their current shot record as well

The flu shot clinic is open to the public. Those interested in registering for the 2014 Hale Borealis Forum can go to www.haleborealis.com for more information.

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