



News for Immediate Release

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Department of Health Commends Pennsylvania's Dedicated Volunteers

April 10-16 is National Volunteer Week

Harrisburg – Volunteers play a crucial role in protecting the health and safety of Pennsylvanians, acting Health Secretary Dr. Eli Avila said today to recognize the upcoming observance of National Volunteer Week.

"Whether it's a major disaster like the earthquake in Japan that affects tens of thousands or a car crash that injures just one person, volunteers are an essential part of every emergency response," Avila said. "National Volunteer Week is the perfect time to say 'thank you' to our volunteers for selflessly giving of their free time, and sometimes risking their own safety, to help protect Pennsylvania."

The State Emergency Registry of Volunteers in Pennsylvania, or SERVPA, is coordinated by the Department of Health and was established in response to a federal order to enhance the nation's disaster response capability. SERVPA is a secure statewide database of pre-credentialed health care professionals and other non-medical individuals who are willing to volunteer their services in the event of a disaster or public health emergency.

"Launching an effective response during any kind of emergency is always challenging," Avila added. "Having SERVPA in our emergency preparedness arsenal means no precious time will be wasted during a disaster searching for competent and willing volunteers. This program and its volunteers are invaluable."

Currently, there are more than 8,200 medical and non-medical volunteers registered in SERVPA. The ultimate goal of SERVPA is to engage volunteers in local emergency service and respond to requests for emergency assistance from other states.

National Volunteer Week was established in 1974 as an annual celebration of volunteering.

Pennsylvanians interested in registering to volunteer through SERVPA should visit <https://www.serv.pa.gov>.

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