



## St. Mary's County Health Department

### NEWS RELEASE

[www.smchd.org](http://www.smchd.org)

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### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TALKS AVAILABLE

*September is National Preparedness Month*

LEONARDTOWN, MD (September 15, 2006) – September is National Preparedness Month. Clean-up continues following Tropical Storm Ernest, which served as a reminder of the unpredictable nature of Mother Nature, the vulnerability of coastal regions, including the Chesapeake Bay, and the importance of being prepared.

During the last year, St. Mary's County Health Department has pursued an aggressive campaign of educating county residents about how to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools. Erin Reiney, special projects coordinator at the health department, reports that over 5,000 people in the county learned about emergency preparedness last year through presentations, static displays, and community health education events.

"Ernesto reminds us of the importance of preparing for public health challenges that are a concern before, during and after a disaster," said Nancy Luginbill, RN, MSN, director of Community Health Services at the health department. Local public health officials work all year long to plan and prepare for the unlikely event of a man made or natural disaster.

The goal of National Preparedness Month is to increase public awareness about the importance of preparing for emergencies and to encourage individuals to take action. The health department shares that goal and plans to continue the effort to educate individuals and organizations throughout the year.

"No community is truly prepared for a disaster until individuals, families and households

(more)

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take personal responsibility for preparedness," said Erin Reiney, special projects coordinator for the health department's emergency preparedness education effort.

Reiney gives talks about emergency preparedness tailored to the individual needs of an audience. Her talk, "Being Prepared is Central to Good Health," teaches information that every county resident should know.

National Preparedness Month provides county residents with opportunities to learn more about preparing for emergencies, including natural and manmade threats. Individuals are being encouraged to learn about different threats, make an emergency supply kit, establish a family emergency plan, and get involved in preparing their communities.

County residents may learn more about what they can do in advance of an emergency by visiting the St. Mary's County Government tent at the St. Mary's County Fair in Leonardtown, September 23. Visitors to the display will receive preparedness information and learn about work being done to identify special needs populations and prepare for their safety during an emergency.

To schedule a talk for your group or organization, call Erin Reiney, emergency preparedness educator, at 301-475-4330.

For more information about how to prepare yourself and your family for an emergency visit these Web sites:

- St. Mary's County Health Department: [www.smchd.org](http://www.smchd.org)
- U.S. Office of Homeland Security: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)
- The American Red Cross: [www.prepare.org](http://www.prepare.org)

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