

For Immediate Release

NYC MEDICS SENDING RADIATION EXPERTS TO JAPAN
Responding to Urgent Request for Assistance

NEW YORK, NEW YORK (April 17, 2011)— As the nuclear situation continues to intensify in Japan, NYC Medics responds by sending a specialized team of radiological and nuclear emergency experts. Dr. Steven M. Becker will join NYC Medics volunteers Dr. Katherine Uранеck and Dr. Andrew Karam. They deploy Wednesday, April 20, 2011 to work with to NYC Medics partners, Tokushukai Medical Assistance Team (TMAT), a Japanese disaster relief organization.

“During our field assessment it became very clear that that the most urgent need was to provide experts in radiation and nuclear issues,” said NYC Medics Executive Director Katherine Bequary. “There are many concerns surrounding radiation exposure among medical professionals as well as the public and our team will help address them.”

The NYC Medics Radiological Team is composed of a risk communication expert, a health physicist, and an emergency medicine physician. They will provide training in radiation issues, incident management and risk communication for hospital, healthcare, public information and emergency response professionals. They will also review preparedness plans and materials and provide guidance to help strengthen TMAT’s planning and training efforts. Meetings are also being arranged with key authorities and officials in the affected areas.

Dr. Andrew Karam, a health physicist, is the Director of Radiological Operations, Bureau of Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response for New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. He is an internationally respected board-certified radiation safety professional with particular expertise in issues related to radiological terrorism, the safe use of radioactive materials, and practical aspects of managing radioactive materials programs. His experience also includes military radiation safety and radiation safety program management. He has also been a consultant to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Dr. Katherine Uранеck is the Senior Medical Coordinator for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in the Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Program. Her primary focus areas include radiation incident planning and response, hospital surge capacity, pediatric preparedness, and mass fatality planning. Dr. Uранеck has participated on the Center for Biosecurity’s Working Group on Emergency Mass Critical Care, Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Working Group, Radiation Population Monitoring, and the The National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements (NCRP) Scientific Committee 4-2 "Population Monitoring and Decontamination Following a Nuclear or Radiological Incident." Dr. Uранеck has extensive experience teaching medical professionals about radiological issues and is a board certified, residency trained emergency physician.



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Also joining the Assistance Mission is Dr. Steven M. Becker, Associate Professor of Environmental Health Science at the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health. Becker is a leading expert on the public health, community response, and risk communication issues associated with major radiation emergencies. He has had extensive on-site disaster experience, including work in Ukraine and Belarus on the continuing community impacts of the Chernobyl disaster, and work in Japan after the 1999 nuclear accident in Tokaimura. Dr. Becker was invited by New York City Medics and TMAT to participate on this mission.

NYC Medics (NYCM) is a 501c3 not for profit disaster relief and humanitarian aid organization that provides immediate emergency medical care and aid to people in need in the aftermath of a disaster and supports ongoing relief efforts in complex humanitarian emergencies, irrespective of location, race, creed or political affiliation. Since 2005, nearly 200 NYCM professional medical volunteers have provided life saving, emergent care to more than 26,000 people affected by natural disasters. To make a donation or learn more about ways you can be involved go to www.nycmedics.org.

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For more information on NYC Medics, or to schedule an interview contact Phil Suarez at +1 914.434.4750 or press@nycmedics.org