



# The National Association of County and City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health



## NACCHO's Preparedness Programs

### Advanced Practice Centers

Develop cutting-edge tools and resources that will help local health departments and health care organizations nationwide, prepare for, respond to, and recover from major emergencies. NACCHO's eight Advanced Practice Centers provide unique contributions to equip the nation for a preparedness emergency.

### All Hazards Preparedness Integration and Policy

Ensures that NACCHO's public health preparedness programs and policies meet the needs of local public health and integrate effectively with the work being done at the state and federal levels.

### Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

Assists the Office of the Surgeon General's MRC program in its work to support local MRC units. NACCHO provides capacity-building support for the MRC's growth and works to educate state and local health officials and partner organizations about the relevance, timeliness, and need for the MRC.

### Project Public Health Ready (PPHR)

Prepares LHD staff to respond, in partnership with community-based organizations, to any public health or medical emergency. PPHR's goal is to fully integrate Local Health Departments into the response community.

### Public Health Preparedness Technical Assistance

Prioritizes the development of tools that assist local health departments to further cultivate an all-hazards emergency response infrastructure. NACCHO maintains searchable online clearinghouses of preparedness-related tools and resources and the Preparedness Peer Assistance Network, a Web-based referral service that pairs emergency preparedness practitioners to Peer Advisors in other local health departments for guidance on preparedness topics.

### Strategic National Stockpile (SNS)

Provides resources, information, and technical assistance about SNS and the Cities Readiness Initiative to help local health departments prepare for a public health emergency. NACCHO's SNS program serves as a conduit between local health departments and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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

## The Medical Reserve Corps Program (MRC)

### What is the MRC?

- The MRC is a community-based, civilian, volunteer program that helps build the public health infrastructure of communities
- Each unit is organized and trained to address various challenges from public health education to disaster response
- MRC volunteers supplement existing local emergency and public health resources
- Volunteers include physicians, nurses, veterinarians, as well as lawyers, clergy, and other interested community members

## Health Care Organizations and MRC Volunteers

A local MRC unit can provide a team of trained medical volunteers who, when called upon during a disaster, will support and enhance local, regional, or statewide hospital response.

During an emergency, hospitals can utilize MRC volunteers to fulfill several functions including the need for additional physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists, and other healthcare professionals to treat the anticipated large number of patients.

Retired healthcare professionals, healthcare students and other community healthcare volunteers can assist with taking and recording patient's vital signs, patient history, transporting supplies, assisting in other areas of the hospital such as materials management, housekeeping, food services, and crowd control.

Volunteers can even participate in administrative, secretarial, translation, and reception duties.

### Examples of public health, MRC, and health care collaboration:

- ★ MRC volunteers in northern California participated in the statewide hospital earthquake exercise, "Golden Guardian." Volunteers drilled a standardized licensing and credentialing process and disaster triage skills with local hospitals.



- ★ The Mid-America MRC, Kansas, signed a collaborative agreement with the Veterans Administration Medical Center, Kansas City, to provide backfill at the Center during emergencies outside the area and to assist with other healthcare initiatives.
- ★ In northeast Minnesota, the local MRC unit was formed in cooperation with 7 county public health departments and 16 hospitals.
- ★ In Massachusetts, the South Shore Hospital developed an MRC unit to assist the hospital during a disaster when resources, such as retired nurses; physicians; and other allied health care personnel, will be needed.



## Teaming up for Emergency Preparedness

### What are the benefits of a health care organization-public health partnership? Consider:

- Opportunities to have each organization's needs and interests represented at one table
- Burden sharing and delegation of public health medical responsibilities in the community
- A stronger, unified voice in approaching state and federal agencies
- Opportunities to build trust across the public health medical communities
- Coordination and economies of scale in exercises and equipment purchases and usage
- Better coordination and reduced redundancy of staff and volunteer deployments
- Means for fostering creative thinking
- Practice in using advanced technologies for communication across organizations

**- In short, a more effective emergency response**

### Building a Partnership Between Health Care Organizations and Public Health:

- Step 1: Understand the goal of a hospital-public health relationship**
- Step 2: Educate key decision makers in the participating organizations about the benefits of partnerships**
- Step 3: Form a partnership working group**
- Step 4: Take time for trust building and familiarizing**
- Step 5: Through the working group, coordinate and delegate responsibilities for emergency preparedness**
- Step 6: Through the working group, coordinate mechanisms to coordinate equipment purchase and share equipment**
- Step 7: Decide on state of the art communications all members can use to facilitate coordination during an emergency**
- Step 8: Solidify the protocols and coordination mechanisms the partnership develops in a formal memorandum of understanding**
- Step 9: Celebrate your mutual success**