



NACCHO and the Medical Reserve Corps

Strengthening Ties with the Nation's Public Health Systems



What is the Medical Reserve Corps?

- The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a community-based, civilian, volunteer program that helps build the public health infrastructure of communities nationwide.
- Each MRC unit is organized and trained to address a wide range of challenges from public health education to disaster response.
- MRC volunteers supplement existing local emergency and public health resources.

The Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act, signed into law by President Bush in 2006, officially acknowledges the Medical Reserve Corps

What Can MRC Volunteers Do?

- **Support** local public health, while advancing the priorities of the U.S. Surgeon General by:
 - Promoting disease prevention
 - Improving health literacy
 - Eliminating health disparities
 - Enhancing public health preparedness
- **Assist** local hospitals and health departments with surge personnel needs
- **Participate** in mass prophylaxis and vaccination exercises and community disaster drills
- **Train** with local emergency response partners
- **And More...**

How the MRC Benefits Your Community

- Bolsters public health and emergency response infrastructures by providing supplemental personnel
- Enables communities to meet specific health needs
- Allows the local community more autonomy (not as reliant on state and national resources)
- Gives community members the opportunity to participate in developing strategies to make their communities healthier and safer
- Provides mechanisms for information sharing and coordination between all partner organizations
- Creates a dialogue between emergency management and public health agencies
- Allows for national recognition of local public health and emergency response efforts

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

MRC Involvement in Public Health Activities

Public Health Preparedness

- Shelter staffing
- Alternate care facility staffing
- Mass antibiotic dispensing
- Surge capacity
- Mental health support
- Emergency communication

Community Outreach

- Back to school immunization and flu shot clinics
- Classroom education
- Diabetes detection
- Blood drives
- Smoking cessation education
- Food safety

MRC Volunteers as "Ambassadors" of the Surgeon General

- Improving health literacy:
 - Ongoing public health education classes for grammar school children. (Southern Maine MRC)
- Promoting Disease Prevention:
 - Blood sugar and pressure screenings at various community events. (Clark County, OH MRC)
 - Quarterly health forums on obesity, diabetes, and other disease and injury prevention issues. (DeKalb County, GA MRC)
 - Monthly educational program for MRC and community members on topics such as preventing and managing back pain, asthma and allergies, and how to get the most out of your walk. (Beach Cities Health District, CA MRC)
- Eliminating Health Disparities:
 - Participation in the Connect Health Improvement Project pool party for teens involved in extra-curricular activities; provided sunscreen and sun safety tips. (Douglas County, KS MRC)
 - Ongoing assistance at a local free health care facility during the evenings and weekends. (Mid-America (MO) MRC)
- Public Health Preparedness:
 - Participation in an exercise where medical and non-medical volunteers worked side-by-side with public health employees to set up and operate a non-traditional mass vaccination clinic. The exercise, using seasonal flu vaccine, tested the ability to vaccinate 500 persons per hour in a pandemic flu scenario. (Yavapai County, AZ MRC)
 - Pharmacists managed inventory for a mass prophylaxis exercise. (Bergen County, NJ MRC)
 - "File for Life": Targets seniors to maintain emergency and medical information. (Snohomish County, WA MRC)

NACCHO/MRC Partnership

NACCHO assists the MRC program in enhancing MRC units' ability to meet local, state, and national needs. Capacity-building activities include:

- Coordinating the distribution of grant funding
- Developing a national marketing strategy and publishing a quarterly national newsletter
- Developing resources and tools to strengthen the knowledge and skills of MRC members
- Assisting in the planning of regional and national meetings

NACCHO/MRC Activities

Core Competencies for MRC Volunteers:

- A set of learning competencies adopted nationwide that enhance MRC units' ability to recruit and train volunteers for disaster response.
- **MRC - In Focus Quarterly Newsletter:**
 - A tool that helps link MRC units, partners, and communities and provides information about what the MRC is doing at the national and local levels.
- **MRC Webinar Series:**
 - A series of online seminars that provide information on various topics for MRC leaders, volunteers, and other stakeholders.
- **NACCHO-MRC Capacity-Building Awards:**
 - Funding that supports the development of MRC units and promotes integration into their local public health and emergency response systems.

NACCHO Initiatives and the MRC

• **Advanced Practice Centers:** Local Health Departments developing cutting edge tools and resources to help prepare for, respond to, and recover from major emergencies.

Resources include:

- MRC Self-Paced Training Courses CD ROM
- Isolation and Quarantine Toolkit
- Plan to Be Safe: Training Modules for Dispensing and Vaccination Clinics
- Preparing for Pandemic Flu Pocket Guide
- **Toolbox:** An online clearinghouse of preparedness-related tools and resources that can be searched by topic area, submitting institution, or type of tool.
- **Cities Readiness Initiatives Integration:** Tools and guidance on how to integrate an MRC unit into the local CRI plan.
- **Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health:** A guide for local communities to help identify and address environmental health priorities.