



# MRC ★ In Touch

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## CALENDAR

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### March-

3/24-3/25 -  
Psychological First Aid  
Instructor Train-the-  
Trainer Workshops  
Denver, Colorado

### April-

4/4-4/8 -  
2009 Integrated Medical,  
Public Health,  
Preparedness, and  
Response Training  
Summit  
Dallas, Texas

## LINKS

Medical Reserve Corps

MRC at NACCHO

## Featured Article

### Special Needs Shelters and the MRC

Special needs shelters have become a very popular topic for MRC units across the nation, since units have been asked to both establish and operate these shelters with little to no guidance. Therefore, the Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps (OCVMRC) is reforming its Special Needs Populations Work Group. The first project will be to develop guidance for MRC units on managing shelters for special needs populations.

For the past two years, Northwest Ohio has been developing and using a model for special needs shelters. The model has been shared with the OCVMRC, who is endeavoring to work with the American Red Cross (ARC) at the national level to develop an agreement between the two programs.

Stay tuned for updates from the MRC Special Needs Populations Work Group. If you are aware of any good resources which address the creation and operation of special needs shelters, especially those particular to MRC units, you may send them to Gary W. Brown, the Region VII MRC Coordinator, at [gary.brown@hhs.gov](mailto:gary.brown@hhs.gov).

## Tips

- Consider using an "on duty" staff list that includes the staff names, photos, and duties. Badges should be worn by all personnel.
- Individuals with limited communication should wear a form of identification.
- Individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities may have difficulty distinguishing shelter staff from strangers. By having clear identification as staff, you can help families and shelter residents to identify individuals capable of assisting them.
- Start brainstorming ideas on how your MRC unit can be prepared for a special needs shelter.

## MRC/NACCHO Connections

### Health Equity and Social Justice

Certain population groups (usually lower income communities), are less able to comply with preparedness standards than others due to social and economic inequalities. Often these groups are labeled "vulnerable" or "special needs" populations.

NACCHO's health equity and social justice initiatives explore why these populations bear a disproportionate burden of disease and mortality, and what local health departments (LHDs) can do to better address the causes of these inequities. As part of this work, NACCHO has established *The LHD National Coalition for Health Equity* to build solidarity and share experiences among LHDs, develop public policy agendas, identify the need for training, and increase public awareness.

For more information about the health equity and social justice projects, and how you can get your MRC unit involved with this project, visit <http://www.naccho.org/topics/justice/> or contact Emily Cohen at [ecohen@naccho.org](mailto:ecohen@naccho.org).

### Announcements

#### Integrated Training Summit

The 2009 Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness, and Response Training Summit will be held in Dallas, Texas from April 4-8, 2009. [Click here for details.](#)

#### Notification of Capacity Building Awards

The Centers MRC units that applied for a Capacity Building Award received notification of their status on December 31, 2008. If you applied for an award and did not receive notification, please contact Justine Uhlenbrock at [juhlenbrock@naccho.org](mailto:juhlenbrock@naccho.org).

#### Understanding the Link Between LHDs and MRC Units

A research report was conducted to analyze and review the partnerships between LHDs and MRC units. The survey was conducted with key constituents in the MRC-LHD community. Read about "[The Value of Partnerships: Understanding the Link Between Local Health Departments and Medical Reserve Corps Units](#)" today.

To submit information for either MRC: In Touch or MRC: In Focus, please contact Megan Skupien at [mskupien@naccho.org](mailto:mskupien@naccho.org) or (202) 783-1376.



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