



# MRC ★ In Touch

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## Featured Article

### MRC Units Prepare for A Possible H1N1 Resurgence in the Fall

With the strong likelihood that there will be a resurgence of H1N1 this fall, MRC units are taking steps to prepare. In Monmouth County (NJ), MRC volunteers assisted their local township with a drive-thru Point of Distribution (POD) exercise that included 14 MRC volunteers, local police, CERT volunteers, health department staff, the regional New Jersey state planner, and state evaluators.

The purpose of the POD exercise was to test the target capability of public mass prophylaxis using a drive-thru model for the first time in the county, which could be used if there is a resurgence of H1N1 this fall. One of the challenges during the POD included a lower turnout of participants. Therefore, the MRC cycled volunteers and staff multiple times through the exercise. As a result, volunteers and staff were able to rotate jobs, experience different roles and responsibilities, and understand the perspective of the public. This learning experience was an essential part of preparing for H1N1 and has resulted in the continued development of successful local planning relationships between local communities and volunteer groups in the county.

MRC units can also work with employers to take action to prevent the spread of H1N1 in the workplace. After the Mower County (TX) MRC sent out information on household preparedness, the Mower County Highway Department asked the unit to present on pandemic flu to employees.

Margene Gunderson, MRC volunteer and director of community health services of Mower County Public Health, presented information about household preparedness and "pandemic flu 101" to 20 employees. She also distributed Mower County MRC flyers, and a few people have shown interest in joining the unit. Employees learned about how to prevent germs in the workplace that may contribute to the spread of H1N1, as well as the benefits of becoming an MRC volunteer.

To stay up-to-date with news regarding H1N1 and learn how you can prevent H1N1 in your local community, visit the Center for

Disease Control and Prevention's Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>.

## Tips

1. Review your unit's response plan and conduct a call down exercise with your volunteers.
2. Train your volunteers about preventive measures for H1N1 and seasonal influenza and share this message with the community.
3. Host a POD exercise with your MRC unit.
4. Use this opportunity to recruit volunteers.
5. Visit local businesses and schools to provide information about preventing the spread of the flu, such as proper hand washing and cough etiquette.

## MRC/NACCHO Connections

### **How Does Your Local Health Department Measure Up to the Rest of the U.S.?**

NACCHO in collaboration with local health departments (LHDs) nationwide, created the "2008 National Profile of Local Health Departments" to provide a reliable and comprehensive description of the infrastructure and practice of LHDs in the U.S.

The profile survey, which was sent via an electronic Web-based survey to every LHD in the U.S., covers questions such as governance, finances, LHD workforce, health disparities, emergency preparedness, and much more.

The data collected are used by many people to influence public health policy, to provide benchmarks for states or individual LHDs to make comparisons, to educate others in public health, and many other reasons. "The National Profile of Local Health Departments" profile study is a resourceful tool that your MRC unit can use to discover how your LHD measures up to the rest of the nation, and what areas of improvement are needed in your community.

To view or purchase a copy of the profile study, visit: <http://www.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/profile/resources/2008reports/index.cfm>.

The "2008 National Profile of Local Health Departments" is supported by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and a cooperative agreement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## Announcements

### **The OCVMRC Announces Fourth Year of Capacity Building Awards**

The Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps, through its cooperative agreement with NACCHO, is pleased to announce the availability of Capacity Building Awards for MRC units for 2009–2010. Sponsoring organizations of MRC units must have been registered by July 31, 2009 in order to apply. Previously funded MRC units will be eligible for \$5,000; new or previously unfunded MRC units will be eligible for \$10,000. Applications must be completed online no later than September 15, 2009. For more information, visit <http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MRC/CBA.cfm>. If you have any questions, contact Justine Uhlenbrock at (202) 507-4195, [juhlenbrock@naccho.org](mailto:juhlenbrock@naccho.org).

### **Call for Proposals for the 2010 Preparedness Summit**

The 2010 Preparedness Summit will showcase best practice training models, tools, and resources that illustrate proven results in building and sustaining public health preparedness at the local, state, tribal, or national level. Abstracts will be accepted for posters, sharing sessions, interactive sessions, and workshops. Abstracts may be submitted until Monday, August 31, 2009 at 12 noon EDT.

For more information and to submit your abstract, visit <http://www.phprep.org>.

### **Sign up to Receive the "Preparedness Brief"**

The "Preparedness Brief" is NACCHO's bi-monthly e-newsletter publication that is sent to thousands of leaders in the preparedness field. Be sure to subscribe to this free e-letter to discover the latest in public health preparedness. The next issue will be distributed in mid-September and will focus on planning for a pandemic influenza just in time to address issues surrounding the H1N1 resurgence. Each issue provides articles written by experts in the field, journal articles, tools, and much more! Sign up today at: <http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/AHPIP/preparednessbrief.cfm>.

### **MRC Toolkit at <http://www.naccho.org>**

Have you visited NACCHO's Toolbox's MRC Toolkit lately? The MRC Toolkit features over 50 helpful and effective tools that are designed to help your MRC unit. To access the MRC Toolkit, visit the NACCHO Toolbox at: <http://www.naccho.org/toolbox>.

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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