



# MRC In Touch

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

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April 2014

[www.medicalreservecorps.gov](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov)

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## Featured Article

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### Central New York MRC Supports State Special Olympics

On Feb. 22, 11 Central New York MRC volunteers assisted with operations at the New York State Special Olympics Winter Games. The Central New York MRC (CNYMRC) got involved with this event after their leadership committee suggested that this would be a great opportunity for the volunteers to support local residents during cold winter months.

This year, the New York State Special Olympics Winter Games hosted 1,500 athletes and their coaches from across New York to compete in events such as figure skating, snowshoeing, alpine skiing, and floor hockey. The athletes compete for medals and for the opportunity to move on to National Games. The CNYMRC became involved as service volunteers, with nine volunteers staffing the snowshoeing events and two volunteers assisting at the alpine skiing events. Volunteers assisted with set-up, escorted athletes to the starting lines, distributed lunches to athletes, and provided lots of cheering as their athletes competed in the events.

“Unfortunately, people with intellectual disabilities often fall through the cracks when it comes to healthcare. This is a population with a variety of special physical and mental health needs that require special consideration by healthcare practitioners,” said Bobbi Alcock, CNYMRC Coordinator. “Among the many positive things the Special Olympics does is how it promotes healthy living--physical activity, fitness, and quality of life--to people with intellectual disabilities. At many Special Olympics events, free health screenings and care such as vision and hearing assessments, physical therapy and medical screenings, and education on healthy living provide services the individuals may not receive otherwise. The Special Olympics, through its programs, also educates healthcare professionals about the needs and care of these individuals, often underserved by the medical community.”

April 7-13 is National Public Health Week! Visit [MRC-Train](#) to learn more about planning for community members with special needs. View [“Identifying Resources for Children/Youth with Special Health Care Needs and Their Families,”](#) and [“Healthcare Access for Persons with Disabilities”](#) to get started.

## MRC/NACCHO Connections

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### Introducing MRC Connect

MRC unit leaders and partners have spoken... "MRC Connect" is the name for the new web-and mobile-based application NACCHO is developing! With over 48 percent of the 529 votes cast during a two-week period, MRC unit leaders have established an identity for their new resource. MRC Connect will help enhance the partnerships among MRC unit leaders, volunteers, partners, and local health departments; simplify the sharing of best practices and critical knowledge; and strengthen the MRC and nationwide public health partnership.

NACCHO is working with Rallyware, a company that has created online systems to engage decentralized networks similar to the MRC, to develop this new resource. MRC Connect is on track to launch in July, and will help MRC unit leaders and volunteers manage logistics and tracking of events and trainings via their smartphones and a new

online system. It will also connect users with other unit leaders, volunteers, and partners throughout the national MRC network. MRC Connect is an optional resource to help MRC unit leaders manage important activity details, share information about their units, and track previous events and achievements. Users will be able to enter into various communities, similar to LinkedIn groups, based on interests and location. Additionally, users will be able to communicate with others via open discussion or private message.

Naming the application is just one step of the many that NACCHO and Rallyware have taken to develop MRC Connect. Members of NACCHO's MRC Application Steering Group, an advisory group of MRC unit leaders, state and regional coordinators, and NACCHO and DCVMRC leadership, have provided continued feedback on the new application's look and functionality since its inception in October 2013. In preparation for the application's launch, attendees of the 2014 Preparedness Summit had the opportunity to test MRC Connect at the NACCHO MRC Exhibit Booth. Feedback from the demonstration will be used to update the application before its launch this summer. [Learn more about what MRC Connect will do.](#)

## Announcements

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### Congratulations to the DCVMRC Recognition Awardees

CAPT Tosatto announced the recipients of the 2014 Division of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps Recognition Awards during the MRC Well Check Call on April 8. The DCVMRC was pleased and excited to receive more than 75 nominations in nine award categories-- all of which highlighted wonderful contributions to the health and safety of local communities. In addition to the winners listed below, Rick Miller, Florida MRC State Coordinator, was honored with the fourth annual Elizabeth Fitch Memorial Leadership Award. View the list of winners below, and learn more about the awards on the DCVMRC's [website](#).

Award	Winners	Winners
Ambassador Award	Mount Prospect MRC	Champaign County MRC
Community Resilience Award	Broward County MRC	Moncalm-Ionia MRC
Innovator Award	West Central Florida MRC	Central Nebraska MRC
Mentor Award	Adams County MRC	Fort Bend MRC
Outstanding MRC Housing Organization Award	NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; NYC MRC	Uncas Health District; Uncas Health District MRC
Outstanding MRC Partner Organization	Southwest Youth Services New Mexico; Native Health Initiative MRC	Norfolk Community Emergency Response Team (CERT); Norfolk MRC
Outstanding MRC Public Health Volunteer Award	Kaho Onomichi of the Greater Sullivan County MRC	Mary Emma Dixon of the Three Rivers MRC
Outstanding MRC Responder Award	Jeanne Krieger of the New Orleans MRC	Joanne Tyree of the Oklahoma Region 7 - Tulsa County MRC
MRC Picture of the Year Award	Cape Cod MRC	Macomb County Health Department MRC

### Thank You to Everyone Who Attended the 2014 Preparedness Summit

Thank you to all of the MRC unit leaders and volunteers who attended the 2014 Preparedness Summit! This year's Summit brought over 1,650 attendees to Atlanta. Many MRC unit leaders and partners were in attendance to discuss the latest research and best practices in preparedness. NACCHO would like to extend a special thank you to the MRC unit leaders who volunteered to staff the NACCHO MRC Exhibit Booth, participated in NACCHO's ancillary meetings, and presented about their experiences in the MRC.

MRC unit leaders who were not able to attend the Summit can check out the [NACCHO Live Learning Center](#) for recordings from the Summit. Additionally, visit the Preparedness Summit [website](#) to view social media highlights from the Summit. Stay tuned to the [ProMed Network](#) for podcasts featuring speakers from the Summit, and save the date for next year's Summit, April 14-17, 2015 in Atlanta!

## Use Research to Inform Programs for Your MRC Unit

For those who attended the Preparedness Summit in Atlanta last week, you may have seen an increased emphasis on the public health and preparedness communities partnering with academic institutions to translate research findings to education and training. The partner town hall, "Translation of Research to Practice," explored how research can inform sustainable, evidence-based programs and trainings (view this session on the [NACCHO Live Learning Center](#)).

Using research to understand the current capabilities of the MRC is exemplified in the work NACCHO has done with the "2013 Network Profile of the Medical Reserve Corps" report that you will receive later this month. We hope you will look at your unit's processes and benchmark your unit against peers and the national picture. If you are not already reporting to pertinent stakeholders in your community, this project can be a first step in talking about the network and how the MRC builds capacity at the local level. We also hope it illuminates the ways you can collect and report on your own unit's successes in your community, perhaps partnering with students or faculty at your local university to contribute to the growing research on public health and emergency preparedness topics, or the MRC. Stay tuned to the MRC listserv for updates on the report and how you can use the findings to inform your unit's own research and evaluation efforts.

## Access More Public Health Courses through NACCHO University

NACCHO and the DCVMRC are pleased to announce expanded course offerings for MRC unit leaders! [NACCHO University](#), NACCHO's new online learning platform, has now partnered with MRC-Train to offer even more courses to help public health professionals develop the knowledge and competencies needed to advance their careers.

To access the NACCHO University courses, login to your MRC/TRAIN account as you normally would at <http://www.mrc.train.org>. Use the search option to locate courses on NACCHO University. Once you have located the course you would like to take on NACCHO University, simply register and launch the course. You will be automatically logged in and taken to the course on NACCHO University. Like MRC-Train, NACCHO University courses are free to all participants and offer certificates of completion. To learn more about the partnership between MRC-Train and NACCHO University, [view](#) the FAQ's document. If you have additional questions about NACCHO University, please email [mrc@naccho.org](mailto:mrc@naccho.org).



The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to be a leader, partner, catalyst, and voice for local public health departments.

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