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Featured Article

Lessons Learned from the Springfield Department of Health and Human Services' Preparedness Month Flu Clinic

On Sept. 26, 2013, the Springfield (MA) Department of Health and Human Services, with assistance from the Springfield MRC, hosted a free flu vaccination clinic in conjunction with National Preparedness Month. The flu vaccination clinic emphasized the importance of staying healthy as part of being prepared and is a component of the overall readiness protocol for emergencies. Representatives from the health department reached out to the local African-American population to improve typically low flu vaccination rates. To increase turnout for the flu clinic, the Springfield Department of Health and Human Services leveraged their relationships with local community-based organizations—barber shops, schools, senior centers, restaurants, farmers' markets, and convenience stores—who generated excitement for the event.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health Vaccine Unit provided the vaccine, and the flu clinic took place at the local library in an effort to increase turnout with neighborhood families. Three Springfield MRC volunteers served at the event, assisting with greeting attendees, reviewing forms, maintaining flow, and providing health information. The flu clinic successfully reached the target audience and all age groups, providing 30 doses of the vaccine.

Through their outreach and recruitment efforts, the Springfield Department of Health and Human Services learned a number of important lessons to incorporate into future vaccination outreach to underserved populations. Some residents still thought that getting a flu shot would give them the flu so they refused; others had never received the flu shot before and were not interested in starting; some stated that they did not need the vaccination since they use other ways of avoiding the flu; and others also thought that something in the shot would be hurtful to them. The department is incorporating these lessons learned into future work so that they can correct the misinformation residents have about flu shots. They also identified important partners in distributing information, such as barber shops and the library, and will explore the use of these partners in the future.

Is your unit looking for more information about flu season? View NACCHO's [Influenza](#) and [Immunization](#) toolboxes for flu season resources.

MRC/NACCHO Connections

First Look at the New Web and Mobile-Based Application for the MRC

NACCHO is working with Rallyware, a company that has created online systems to engage decentralized networks similar to the MRC, to develop a new resource. The new platform, scheduled to launch in Summer 2014, will help MRC unit leaders and volunteers manage logistics and tracking of events and trainings via their smartphones and a new online system. This web and mobile-based application will also connect users with other unit leaders, volunteers, and partners throughout the national MRC network.

The new online platform is an optional resource to help MRC unit leaders manage important event details, share information about your unit, 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.

The new system will be available to MRC unit leaders in Summer 2014. MRC unit leaders can opt to invite volunteers and partners who are interested in joining the communities to increase engagement and best practice sharing. This new platform 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. Learn more about NACCHO's work with [Rallyware](#), and NACCHO's investment in [mobile health technology](#).

Announcements

Network Profile of the Medical Reserve Corps Illustrates the MRC Network, Identifies Challenges

Did you know that 84 percent of MRC units have a volunteer training plan? Find out more about the national MRC Network in the upcoming "Network Profile of the Medical Reserve Corps" report, scheduled for release in March 2014. In the spring of 2013, 87 percent of MRC unit leaders participated in NACCHO's MRC Network Profile survey. Thanks to this outstanding response rate, the upcoming report will paint a fuller picture of the MRC network as a whole. The report will allow MRC unit leaders to gain a better understanding of how their unit fits into to the larger MRC network, and will provide the necessary information to speak about the value of the MRC network overall and the critical roles your unit fills at the local level.

The Network Profile also allowed NACCHO to understand where MRC units need additional assistance when carrying out their local missions. To address these challenges, NACCHO will soon release templates and other tools developed in partnership with several MRC units, covering the key areas of the [Factors for Success](#). These resources have been created and tested by MRC units, and have helped guide these units in their work. So if your unit is one of the 16 percent of units missing a training plan, soon you will be able to access the outline of another unit's successful training plan—along with other useful tools. Stay tuned for further information from NACCHO about the availability of these resources.

Demonstrate the Value of the MRC to Local Health Departments

NACCHO University is a new resource that offers free online courses and learning modules to help local public health professionals develop their public health knowledge and competencies. This new website features an online module titled "[Building Capacity From Within: Demonstrating the Value of the Medical Reserve Corps to Local Health Departments](#)" that illustrates the value and role of MRC volunteers within local health departments. MRC unit leaders can view this module to learn more about the MRC/local health department relationship, and to discover how to demonstrate their value to local health departments for future partnership opportunities. Both [MRC-Train](#) and [NACCHO University](#) offer excellent opportunities for self-paced continuing education-- check them out to see what's offered!

MRC units who are looking to partner with their local health department can benefit from additional resources from NACCHO. View the issue brief, "[The Medical Reserve Corps: A Valuable Asset to Local Health Departments](#)," and NACCHO's [policy statement](#) for the inclusion of the MRC in public health, preparedness, and response activities to demonstrate the value of the MRC to your local health department.

Mobilization for Health: National Prevention Partnership Awards Grant Opportunity

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health has announced the "Mobilization for Health: National Prevention Partnership Awards" grant program. This program is designed to promote and accelerate partnerships and collaborations to improve health and wellness; educate and train health workers and the public; and establish communications programs for all community populations. Applications for the funding opportunity are due at 5PM ET on March 3. View [more information](#) about the awards and apply now.

Nominate Your Health Activist Hero

Recognize a great health leader in your community and nominate them for a WEGO Health Activist award! WEGO Health is a online community that fosters new relationships among health advocates and offers helpful resources. [Nominate](#) a person or organization who has enriched the lives of others by sharing their experience, knowledge, and strength for this award, or endorse other nominees.

NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

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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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