



# MRC In Touch

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

March 2014

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

## Featured Article

### Marion County MRC Takes Action to Improve Residents' Eating Habits

When the Marion County MRC (OH) discovered that they ranked as the 66th healthiest county out of Ohio's 88 counties through their Community Health Risk Assessment, they decided to take action to improve the health of their residents. Marion Public Health, the housing organization for Marion County MRC, was already teaching nutrition and physical activity courses to preschoolers and elementary students. But Marion County MRC recognized that additional nutrition classes were needed to reach adults so that they could continue their healthy eating education and to ensure the foods they make for their children matches what their children have learned about nutrition.

In September 2013, Marion County MRC began to develop a monthly adult nutrition class with help from NACCHO's 2013 Competitive Capacity Building Award. The healthy eating classes include preparation of meals and snacks that are simple and budget-friendly. Ten MRC volunteers helped with the development of the course and have assisted in the administration of the class thus far. In January 2014, 15 community members attended the first one-hour "Eating for the Health of It" class. All attendees rated the featured dish, a Mexican crock pot chili, very highly and planned to try it at home. Additionally, attendees expressed interest in learning about healthy lifestyles, prevention of chronic diseases, reading food labels, and ways to enjoy and prepare healthy meals without excess fat, calories, and sodium.

While the adult nutrition class is still in its early stages, it is gaining momentum in the community. More community members have signed up for future classes and several local businesses have requested to bring the class on-site to their facilities. Through the assistance and expertise of the MRC, Marion County is taking steps to improve Marion County's state health ranking and reduce risks of chronic disease.

March is National Nutrition Month! Discover how your MRC unit can extend [healthy eating habits](#) on a community level.

## MRC/NACCHO Connections

### MRC Activities at the 2014 Preparedness Summit

The 2014 Preparedness Summit is less than a month away! This year's Preparedness Summit is packed with even more activities and sessions that might be of interest to MRC unit leaders and volunteers. **If you haven't registered yet, [register today](#): early bird rates end tonight at 11:59PM EST!**

See what's scheduled for this year's Summit:

- **Sessions Hosted by MRC Unit Leaders.** ["Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response Involving MRC Volunteers"](#); ["Radiation Preparedness Training and Implementing Community Reception Centers"](#); ["Using Media and Targeted Outreach to Increase Volunteer Recruitment before a Disaster Strikes"](#); and ["Bringing MRC Units to Rural Areas and Tribal Nations"](#) feature an MRC unit leader sharing their expertise and lessons learned from their experiences in the MRC. Additionally, MRC partners and DCVMRC leadership will present at several other sessions about their experiences with the MRC.
- **Sessions about Volunteer Engagement.** Experts will discuss innovative approaches to engaging volunteers, forming unlikely partnerships, and mobilizing coalitions to meet community preparedness needs and respond effectively in a disaster at a number of Summit sessions.

- **MRC Informal Meet and Greet.** Meet with other MRC unit leaders and partners in attendance this year. An informal meet and greet is scheduled for Monday, March 31 at 5PM at Pulse bar in the lobby of the Marriott Marquis.
- **NACCHO's MRC Booth.** Stop by NACCHO's MRC Booth in the Exhibit Hall Wednesday and Thursday to learn more about how NACCHO supports the MRC network. Representatives from Rallyware, the company developing the new online platform for the MRC, will also be in attendance to discuss the new platform and to offer demonstrations of the application during Exhibit Hall hours.
- **POD Demonstration.** NACCHO will host a Point of Dispensing (POD) exercise in the Exhibit Hall on Wednesday during lunch. The POD demonstration will feature the benefits of using MRC volunteers for PODs, among other topics. Add the POD exercise to your schedule when you [register](#) for the Summit, or view these [instructions](#) for adding the exercise to an existing registration.

Would you like to learn more about what's in store for the 2014 Preparedness Summit? Join us for NACCHO's Twitter Chat with Summit plenary speakers on Friday, March 14 from 1:00 - 2:00PM EDT. Follow [@prepsummit](#) and **#PS14** to join the conversation. Visit [preparednesssummit.org](http://preparednesssummit.org) for more information and a full schedule of sessions.

## Announcements

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### Nominations for the DCVMRC Recognition Awards Due March 7

The DCVMRC is calling for nominations for the 2014 DCVMRC Recognition Awards. The awards are in honor of those who have provided outstanding support to MRC units. Anyone within the MRC network may serve as a nominator, and there is no limit to the number of nominations that may be submitted.

Nominations are being accepted in the following areas:

- Community Resilience
- Ambassador
- Outstanding MRC Responder
- Outstanding MRC Public Health Volunteer
- Outstanding MRC Housing Organization
- Outstanding MRC Partner Organization (or Partnership)
- Innovator
- Mentor
- MRC Picture of the Year

Winners will be presented as part of a special MRC Well Check Call and Twitter Chat on Tuesday, April 8 at 2:00PM EDT. Submit your nomination by Friday, March 7 at 5:00PM EST to [mrcontact@hhs.gov](mailto:mrcontact@hhs.gov) using the 2014 DCVMRC Recognition Awards Nominations form. Visit the [awards site](#) for more information.

### Name the New NACCHO MRC Online Platform

As you may have seen in recent *MRC In Touch* and *MRC In Focus* publications, NACCHO is developing a new web- and mobile-based platform for the MRC. The platform is under development now and is scheduled to launch in June or July. [Learn more about the new online platform for the MRC.](#)

NACCHO is asking for your help in naming the new platform! All members throughout the national MRC network can vote for their favorite name beginning March 10 through 11:59PM EDT on March 24. The winning name will be announced on Thursday, March 27. Stay tuned to the MRC listserv for an invitation to vote for your favorite name.

### The Network Profile of the MRC is Almost Here!

Did you know that 14 percent of MRC unit leaders work in a volunteer capacity? Don't miss out on these and other fascinating statistics about the MRC network, which will be available in the 2013 Network Profile of the Medical Reserve Corps report.

The Network Profile report will be ready for release this spring. To ensure that you receive your printed copy of the report, verify your contact information on the DCVMRC's website. Please be sure that the mailing address in your unit profile is up to date.

Stay tuned to the MRC listserv for more information about the release of the report.

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# NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

*The National Connection for Local Public Health*

[www.naccho.org](http://www.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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Please contact Alyson Jordan, NACCHO's MRC Communications Specialist, with any questions or suggestions for the newsletter at 202-783-5528 or at [ajordan@naccho.org](mailto:ajordan@naccho.org).