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Featured Article

Winnebago County MRC Supports Local Women's Crisis Clinic

The Winnebago County MRC (IL) routinely participates in public health events in the community. During 2015, they've planned a program to provide flu vaccinations to the homeless and participated in first aid, CPR, and shelter trainings. When they were called upon to support a dinner for a local women's crisis center, they jumped at the chance to assist their community in a different way. The Rockford Rescue Mission offers crisis services to both men and women. The Women's Crisis Center allows the mission to offer short-term housing for up to 48 homeless women and mothers with children. The Center also provides medical care, case management, and life skills education.

The MRC worked in conjunction with the New Life Bible Church to serve dinner to the Center's guests several times on Friday nights throughout the year. Afterwards, volunteers mingle with the women and children staying at the Center. Live music is normally provided at the events as well. "It's really rewarding to the volunteers; anytime they need help we'll be there," said Unit Leader Karla Chester.

The unit enjoys the opportunity to volunteer in their community in a different capacity than they normally do. It expands the reach of the MRC and its potential for new volunteers and additional community partnerships. They already have plans to serve breakfast at the men's clinic later this year.

MRC/NACCHO Connections

New MRC Core Competencies Integrated with MRC-TRAIN

NACCHO, in collaboration with the DCVMRC, is excited to announce the availability of a National MRC Training Plan and the integration of the new MRC Volunteer Core Competencies into MRC-TRAIN.

The updates to MRC-TRAIN will align with the recent adoption of the Competencies for Disaster Medicine and Public Health (DMPH) for MRC Volunteers. The National Training Plan in MRC-TRAIN is an online version of the [NACCHO-MRC Training Plan](#) released in April. It will allow MRC-TRAIN users to select courses based on the DMPH Competency and Learning Path they choose and track their progress. The National MRC Training Plan will also provide a standard core set of training for all members of the MRC network to access. This standard core set of training will help to make collaboration between MRC units more efficient. By providing a "common language," MRC units can communicate their volunteers' capabilities to each other and to partner organizations.

If you are new to MRC-TRAIN or need a refresher course, please reference [MRC-TRAIN 101 for Volunteers](#). Stay tuned for information about how to access the training plan on MRC-TRAIN and for more exciting resources to come around the new MRC Volunteer Core Competencies.

Announcements

HHS Releases Report on the MRC Response During Superstorm Sandy

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General issued [Medical Reserve Corps \(MRC\) Volunteers in New York and New Jersey During Superstorm Sandy](#). According to the OIG, MRC units in New York and New Jersey deployed over 2,000 MRC volunteers during the Superstorm Sandy response that provided over 18,000 hours of service. The MRC units reported challenges and successes. The OIG recommended that the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response work with states and localities to strengthen plans for volunteer communication, shelter staffing, and shelter operations. [Read the complete report](#).

Building Workforce Resilience through the Practice of Psychological First Aid

Public health and emergency response agencies across the country carry the privilege and responsibility of safeguarding the nation's welfare during emergencies and disasters. This would not be possible were it not for the dedicated men and women trained to keep the public safe from a variety of threats and who are tasked to be efficient and effective during emergencies and other critical times. With these important responsibilities comes a frequently strained and stressed work environment. Research shows that challenging work brings with it stress reactions that, if unaddressed, can harm individuals, families, and communities and disrupt even the best organized workplaces.

This is why the Department of Health and Human Services and the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, in partnership with NACCHO, developed [Psychological First Aid for Leaders \(PFA-L\)](#). This free, 90-minute interactive and effective on-line training helps leaders at any level understand and address their staff's stress risks and reactions and create a resilient workplace. PFA-L is based on the principles of Psychological First Aid which is an evidence-informed approach for assisting children, adolescents, adults, families, and responders in the aftermath of a disaster or emergency event. Organizations that work in emergency or disaster related areas such as public health, emergency response, hospitals and other healthcare organizations or even voluntary organizations that are active in disasters will find PFA-L useful.

[Read more about PFA-L](#).

Get Involved in Flu Near You

Although the 2014-2015 flu season is drawing to a close, MRC units can start to prepare for next year's flu season by registering for the Flu Near You platform. Through Flu Near You, thousands of volunteers answer a brief, weekly digital questionnaire about their health to benefit their community's flu awareness and tracking. NACCHO is working with the Skoll Global Threats Fund to explore how local health departments and MRC units can work with people in their communities to enroll them in Flu Near You and how to leverage the data as part of ongoing local influenza surveillance efforts. With more people enrolled in Flu Near You, the aggregate data can outline regional flu trends more accurately and complement existing public health surveillance systems. Sign up today at <https://flunearyou.org/> and encourage your friends, family, and colleagues to do the same. If you are interested in or already using Flu Near You data for local influenza surveillance efforts, please email infectiousdiseases@naccho.org.



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

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