



# MRC In Touch

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

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## Featured Article

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### Oklahoma MRC Volunteers Participate in Free Dental Clinic

Since 2010, the Oklahoma Missions of Mercy event has provided free dental care to underserved populations in different parts of the state. According to the event's organizers, about half of Oklahomans don't have dental insurance. This year's two-day clinic was held on February 6 and 7 in Tulsa, OK. Volunteers created a fully functional dental clinic in the city's Cox Business Center.

This year, the [Oklahoma MRC](#) (OKMRC) was called upon to assist in the event for the first time. More than 52 volunteers from the OKMRC participated. Volunteers measured the vitals of patients in the triage section, helped patients navigate the various treatment areas, provided interpreting services, gave immunizations, and performed oral surgery.

Darlene Lister, an OKMRC volunteer of three years, spent Friday and Saturday in the patient triage section, ensuring patients were medically able to receive treatment. "All of the patients have been so appreciative," she noted.

Event volunteers treated 1,609 patients, which added up to more than \$1.5 million in donated dental services. Patients received a variety of treatments, from dental cleanings to tooth extractions and root canals. More than 2,000 volunteers, many working 12-hour shifts, made this event possible. The Oklahoma MRC also had a table at the venue where prospective volunteers stopped by to hear more about the MRC's role. Oklahoma Missions of Mercy will travel to Oklahoma City in 2016.

## MRC/NACCHO Connections

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### Learn More about NACCHO's 2014-2015 MRC Awards

NACCHO has selected winners for the 2014-2015 MRC Awards. The winners will be publicly announced this month. This year's MRC Awards consisted of two tiers, a \$3,500 Capacity Building Award and a \$15,000 Challenge Award. Eligible MRC units could apply for one or both awards.

Capacity Building Awards are designed to help units grow their capacity by providing funding to help support special projects, training, outreach, or to subsidize administrative costs. Ninety-nine percent of the 700 applicants received an award. The Challenge Award aims to focus innovation in four areas that are aligned with national and local health initiatives. NACCHO received more than 175 applications. After a competitive two-tiered review process, 43 MRC units were selected to receive a Challenge Award.

The number of Challenge Awards issued per focus area were:

Disaster Risk Reduction- 14

Chronic Disease Prevention- 11

Mental and Emotional Wellbeing- 8

Partners for Empowered Communities- 10

Each of this year's Challenge Award winners will be provided with a personal blog page on [NACCHO's MRC Awards website](#) to document their project. Stay tuned for the announcement of the MRC Units and Challenge Award Projects awarded with links to their new blogs.

## Announcements

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### ASPR Releases New National Health Security Strategy

The [National Health Security Strategy and Implementation Plan \(NHSS/IP\) 2015-2018](#) was released on Friday, February 20, 2015 by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR). Hundreds of organizations and agencies participated in crafting the strategy to develop recommended actions that are realistic and achievable.

The latest NHSS contains the following five strategic objectives in which federal agencies will focus resources and programs:

1. Build and sustain healthy, resilient communities.
2. Enhance the national capability to produce and effectively use both medical countermeasures and non-pharmaceutical interventions.
3. Ensure comprehensive health situational awareness to support decision-making before incidents and during response and recovery operations.
4. Enhance the integration and effectiveness of the public health, healthcare, and emergency management systems.
5. Strengthen global health security.

In addition, ASPR released the [National Health Security Review \(NHSR\) 2010-2014](#), which describes progress that the nation has made—along with its persistent challenges—in strengthening national health security over the past four years.

### NACCHO Staff Co-Author Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness Journal Article

Volunteer readiness is an important consideration for any volunteer organization that responds to emergencies. Adequate training is cited as an important factor for volunteer retention, willingness to deploy, and a greater reported confidence and perceived capability. In 2013, NACCHO conducted a survey of all MRC units in the country to assess unit administration, capabilities, and community impact. These data are the basis of original research investigating several MRC unit characteristics associated with having a volunteer training plan. A manuscript by NACCHO and the Division of Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps was published in the most recent edition of [Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness journal](#) (paid access). The research reveals leadership and partnerships play a positive role in facilitating the implementation of training programs.

### New Evidence-Based Planning Guidance for Patient Decontamination Released

Every day, large quantities of hazardous materials are made, transported, stored, and used in communities throughout the United States. With nearly 25 million people living near chemical facilities in the nation, many could be exposed to chemicals following a catastrophic incident. To protect health and save lives in such catastrophic incidents, first responders, medical providers, and public health officials will want to make decisions about how to decontaminate patients based on scientific evidence.

To assist with this, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Health Affairs recently released new evidence based guidance for [Patient Decontamination in a Mass Chemical Exposure Incident](#). MRC units can use this guidance in training exercises for catastrophic events. [Review highlights from the guidance](#).

### MRC Scholarships Available from the Institute for Wellness Education

A special scholarship opportunity for MRC unit leaders is available from the Institute for Wellness Education (IWE) for the next training course, which kicks off on March 9, 2015. IWE's mission is to make health and wellness the norm in communities across the nation by training community-based wellness coaches with science-based strategies so they can help people live longer, healthier, and happier lives.

This scholarship is for full tuition to IWE's introductory wellness coaching course (Take Charge of Your Life: Be Well to Do Well), which enables unit leaders to become certified as a Wellness Coach Level 1 (Advocate). The 36- to 50-hour course is online, self-paced, and approved for up to 50 hours of continuing education credits for nurses, psychologists, social workers, and counselors; NASM approved for 1.9 CEUs. Students may also earn 3 college credits in nutrition. [Learn more about the course](#).

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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 with local health departments.

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