



MRC In Touch

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

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www.medicalreservecorps.gov

Featured Article

St. Louis Regional Radiological Response MRC Ramps Up Training Efforts

While many MRC units provide a wide range of support for local public health departments, hospitals, or clinics, the St. Louis Regional Radiological Response MRC was created to help local, state, and federal agencies respond to a radiological event. The MRC serves 16 jurisdictions in Missouri and Illinois, where there are several potential threats related to nuclear power plants and landfills.

The MRC unit was initially created because of the potential for an accidental radiological release from an uncontrolled smoldering underground fire in a municipal landfill. The landfill is connected to a site containing radiological waste from the Manhattan Project enrichment operations during World War II. The unit held their kickoff meeting in January 2015 and has been training volunteers ever since.

Most recently, the unit participated in a three day Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) course on radiological emergency response. The course provided them with hands-on experience on how to handle different scenarios and use radiological meters and other detection equipment to measure whether a person has been exposed to a radiological substance. The volunteers were trained on the correct use of personal protective equipment and learned how to recognize and identify the biological effects of exposure to radiation from radiological and nuclear incidents.

One of the unit's main objectives is planning for the creation of a Community Reception Center to monitor residents in the event of a radiological emergency. They are working with their housing organization, the St. Louis Department of Health, to create a space for residents to go if they fear they have been contaminated. Potential patients would go through the Center's monitoring devices and can be decontaminated on site. If a patient is showing more severe signs of radiological exposure, the volunteers will organize transportation to an area hospital.

The St. Louis Regional Radiological Response MRC continues to recruit and train volunteers, work toward the creation of the Community Reception Center, and form relationships with necessary community partners, including hospitals. Volunteers need not have a background in radiation; they are trained to handle any situation. They are a great example of MRC volunteers working across state and county lines to keep their communities safer.

MRC/NACCHO Connections

MRC Call to Action: Electronic Smoking Devices

Use of Electronic Smoking Devices (ESDs) sometimes referred to as e-cigarettes, continues to climb throughout the United States. This market is not restricted by Federal regulation and lacks long term clinical research to determine the true health impact of ESDs among youth and adults. For these and additional reasons, ESD use is considered an emerging public health threat. In preparation for the [Great American Smokeout](#) this November,

NACCHO has published an Electronic Smoking Device factsheet that demonstrates the capability of how Medical Reserve Corps Units can play a role in this public health issue.

[View the factsheet.](#)

Announcements

Submit an Abstract for the 2016 Preparedness Summit

There is less than a week to submit an abstract for the [2016 Preparedness Summit!](#) Abstract submission is open through October 14. This year's Summit will explore the theme, "Planning Today for Rebuilding Tomorrow: Focusing on Resiliency and Recovery in the 21st Century." Abstracts are encouraged on subjects such as:

- Building and sustaining resilient communities
- Effectively using, producing, and disseminating medical countermeasures and nonpharmaceutical interventions
- Ensuring situational awareness to support decision making, data management, and information sharing
- Enhancing the integration of public health, healthcare, and emergency management systems
- Strengthening global health security

The Summit is the premier national conference in the field of public health and healthcare preparedness, delivering cross-disciplinary opportunities to share new research and practices with nearly 1,700 colleagues from across the nation. Last year, more than seven MRC volunteers presented at the Summit. This year's Summit will take place April 19–22, 2016 at the Dallas Hilton Anatole. Abstracts are open now through October 14, during National Preparedness Month. [Start an abstract today.](#)

Medical Reserve Corps Units Join Preparedness Month Efforts

Like many organizations, the volunteers of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) took action in their communities during National Preparedness Month. Unit leaders shared their unit's activities on MRC Connect and were featured on NACCHO's [Preparedness Brief Blog](#).

The MRC promotes preparedness every day, but during National Preparedness Month, they go above and beyond to hold training exercises, form invaluable community partnerships, and communicate to their neighbors the necessity of family preparedness. MRC unit leaders from across the country shared their Preparedness Month activities using the MRC Connect app.

Sign Up for Flu Near You!

The 2015-2016 flu season is quickly approaching. Local health departments can start to prepare for this 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 volunteer groups 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.

Want to get involved with Flu Near You? Sign up today at <https://flunearyou.org/> and encourage your friends, family, and fellow volunteers to do the same. If your MRC unit is interested in or already using Flu Near You data for local influenza surveillance efforts, email infectiousdiseases@naccho.org.

Share What Works and be Recognized! Apply for a 2016 Model Practice Award this October.

Your unit and your local health department can be a winner. NACCHO will accept model practice applications until October 31.

NACCHO's Model Practice Program nationally honors and recognizes outstanding local public health practices and shares the outstanding practices through the Model Practices Database. We encourage MRC units to take advantage of this opportunity to showcase and share your unit's work around topics like volunteer management, cultural competence, emergency preparedness, partnerships, and community involvement. By submitting a practice, MRC units can contribute to the overall improvement of public health through evidence-based best practice methods.

For more information and to submit a Model Practices application, visit www.naccho.org/topics/modelpractices. Contact the Model Practices team at practices@naccho.org with any questions. NACCHO looks forward to receiving your applications.

NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

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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 with local health departments.

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