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Featured Article

Southwest Idaho MRC Engages Youth Through Their Summer ReadyKamp Program

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On July 23, 2012, FEMA announced the formation of the Youth Preparedness Council—an effort to encourage youth participation in disaster preparedness. As a response to the Council's formation, the Southwest Idaho Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) used their 2016 NACCHO Challenge Award to put on an annual three-day, four-night summer event beginning in July 2016, called ReadyKamp. ReadyKamp is a program designed for middle school students to learn the FEMA Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) curriculum. By the end of the camp, teens demonstrated success as emergency responders in a large-scale, interactive simulation.

Children and teens are identified by FEMA as vulnerable groups. Children are “more prone than others to damage, loss, suffering, injury, and death in the event of a disaster.”^[1] While all individuals are impacted differently by adversity, some rise to the challenge. Children can be positive influencers and leaders, with prepared children being more confident in the event of an emergency. And children carry their skills through adulthood.^[2] ReadyKamp provided an opportunity for children to overcome adversity and be prepared in the event of a disaster.

ReadyKamp also aimed to increase MRC awareness and effectiveness by garnering youth participation, encouraging lifelong interest in MRC and EMS services. Youth who participated in the camp garnered tangible skills for use in the event of an emergency. The ultimate goal of the project is to generate teen MRC units in schools that assist with school emergencies until fire, EMS, and police arrive on scene.

While only aiming to train 40 teens, in the end ReadyKamp trained 64 campers, 20 of whom decided to continue and join the local MRC unit. Some teens even acted as force multipliers and encouraged their parents to join as well.

Through the trainings, ReadyKamp taught the middle schoolers about emergency response kits and trained teens to perform: triage, CPR, search and rescue, hazardous materials, water rescue, and ICS. The camp introduced them to necessary supplies and the actions necessary to participate as dedicated responders.

Since their ReadyKamp graduation, teens who continued and enrolled in MRC units have responded to community-wide incidents like *E. coli* outbreaks in private wells, MRC training sessions, and community-wide preparedness exercises.

ReadyKamp serves as a great model for potential youth engagement in MRC. Youths who find passion in MRC work at a young age may be more likely to continue with it later in life. They may take on leadership roles, encourage their friends and family to join, and perhaps most importantly, act as advocates in their community. From the Challenge Award, the Southwest Idaho MRC utilized 50 MRC volunteers altogether, putting in over 1,000 hours of service. Moreover, Southwest Idaho MRC used 20 community partners who donated cumulatively over 80 hours of service.

ReadyKamp generated community partnerships and produced 20 teen MRC members. The Southwest Idaho MRC plans to move forward with ReadyKamp, working with local school boards to implement teen MRC units in schools. They plan to generate more community partnerships and expand to Oregon and California.

¹ Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2015). National Strategy for Youth Preparedness Education: Empowering, Education and Building Resilience. Washington: FEMA.

² *Ibid.*

MRC/NACCHO Connections

Support Funding MRC in FY2018

President Trump has released his FY2018 budget request, and the outlook for public health programs is bleak. The President has proposed a cut of \$1.2 billion to CDC and major cuts to other public health programs such as a \$109 million cut to the public health emergency preparedness program.

The Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response received a \$200 million increase to \$1.6 billion in the budget; however, Medical Reserve Corps funding stayed the same at \$6 million. NACCHO supports funding the MRC program at \$11 million in order for volunteers to adequately support their communities' needs in case of disaster. We encourage you to call your Members of Congress and tell them to fully fund this vital program.

As the most effective form of communication, we encourage you to call your Members' staff who work on "health issues" in the home district office. NACCHO has also created an [Advocacy Toolkit](#) for you to use when advocating to your Members of Congress.

Please visit <http://www.naccho.org/advocacy/take-action> and click on the campaign "Support Funding MRC in FY2018" to take action.

Introducing the NACCHO Public Health Preparedness Law Learning Module

To assist public health professionals in incorporating public health law into emergency preparedness planning, response, and recovery efforts, NACCHO recently released a learning module on preparedness law. Developed using the Public Health Emergency Law (PHEL) Competencies as a guide, the course is designed to:

- Train participants to consider the law as they participate in emergency preparedness planning and response activities;
- Prepare participants to confidently respond to changes in the legal environment during declared emergencies that impact the public's health;
- Provide participants with an understanding of potential legal powers and duties during declared emergencies; and
- Help participants identify potential legal risks and responsibilities during declared emergencies

More information about the course can be found [here](#).

The learning module can be accessed via NACCHO University at [this link](#) (scroll to the bottom of the webpage for direct course link). In order to view the course, individuals must first login using their NACCHO account. Please contact the NACCHO Membership Department at membership@naccho.org for support with creating a new account. Any additional questions or comments should be directed to NACCHO's Public Health Law team at phlaw@naccho.org.

New NACCHO Food Safety and Defense Webinar Recordings

NACCHO recently released several new food safety and defense e-learning resources. These include webinar recordings and accompanying materials for two training webinars and two sharing sessions highlighting retail food risk factors and best practices, active managerial control, and edible marijuana.

[Read more...](#)

NACCHO President-Elect Speaks on Preparedness

The [Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security](#) and [Trust for America's Health](#) hosted a Congressional briefing, "What is Needed Now to Prepare for Major Health Emergencies" on June 29 featuring Umair Shah, MD, MPH, Executive Director of Harris County Public Health (TX) and incoming President of NACCHO. Dr. Shah talked about challenges to local health departments' ability to respond to emergencies, especially in light of the cuts included in the President's FY2018 budget. Crystal Watson, Assistant Professor at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Senior Associate at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, provided an overview of [federal funding for health security in FY2018](#). Other panelists included Beth Cameron, Senior Director for Global Biological Policy at NTI; and Paul Petersen, Director, Emergency Preparedness Program at State of Tennessee Department of Health

Announcements

ASPR/HPP Webinar

July 20, 2-3 p.m. ET

[Register here](#)

ASPR's Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange (TRACIE) is hosting a series of webinars for healthcare coalitions (HCCs) interested in improving their preparedness efforts, decision making processes, and operational planning. This webinar will focus on financial models for HCCs and how each are unique. Participants will hear from a variety of panelists about different financial models, lessons learned, benefits, and challenges.

Food Research and Action Center - Disaster SNAP: The Before, During, and After

July 27, 2:00 – 3:00 pm ET

[Register here.](#)

This webinar is meant to inform advocates, organizations, and state agencies about ways that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can assist disaster victims and their communities. Participants will hear from experts about best practices for planning and implementing a Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP) to assist people not already enrolled in regular SNAP as well as opportunities for providing supplemental and replacement benefits for SNAP recipients who suffer a misfortune. The webinar will cover the planning, execution and aftermath stages of D-SNAP and include time for questions.

Rural Disaster Health Topic Collection

In 2016, the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau claimed that rural areas covered 97% of the nation's land area but contained 19.3% of the population (approximately 60 million people). Rural areas are served by a variety of healthcare facilities and practitioners who face specific challenges associated with workforce and other resource shortages, socioeconomic factors that add to resident health risks, and public health issues that often compete with the ability to plan for and respond to natural and human-caused events. Tribal communities (many of which are located in rural areas) have the autonomy to respond to and manage incidents that occur on their lands. These resources highlight guidance for and lessons learned by healthcare practitioners who serve rural and tribal communities. [View resources here.](#)

NACCHO MRC Core Competencies and the NACCHO Toolbox

MRC's Core Competencies, based on the competencies for Disaster Medicine and Public Health (DMPH), represent the foundation of knowledge and skills that all MRC volunteers should possess. With MRC volunteers coming in from a variety of backgrounds, the DMPH Core Competencies may be more broadly described as a common language where MRC units may communicate their volunteers' capabilities to each other and to partner organizations.

Broken into four learning paths, the Core Competencies describe the baseline of volunteer preparedness, response, leadership, and support for community resilience. These Core Competencies represent the MRC Core Values of community, action, resourcefulness, teamwork, and diversity.

The MRC Core Competencies toolkit offers a variety of resources to help MRC units establish and maintain the Core Competencies and may be found on the [NACCHO Website](#) under the “MRC Core Competencies” tab.

Alternatively, members can use the [NACCHO Toolbox](#) to find other pertinent MRC-based resources. Simply follow the link and enter your NACCHO member credentials!

Share Photos of Your MRC Unit in Action!

NACCHO is currently developing the 2017 Network Profile of the MRC! This updated report will once again feature units from across the nation providing public health, preparedness, and response activities in their local communities. We would love to feature pictures of your unit in action. If you have pictures of your unit’s activities from the past few years, send them to mrc@naccho.org. Take a look at the [2013 Network Profile of the MRC](#) or the [2015 Network Profile of the MRC to get an idea for the](#) types of pictures we featured.

Before you send your photos to NACCHO, please ensure all volunteers featured in the photos have signed a photo release form or given permission to you to share them with us. If you have any question, please let us know.



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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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.