



MRC In Touch

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

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Featured Article

Monroe County MRC volunteers address radiological preparedness

Nuclear power plants have safety and security procedures that are continually monitored; however, an accident could release dangerous levels of radiation. With three operating nuclear power plants, the state of Michigan followed in the footsteps of several other U.S. states in 2009 and made Potassium Iodide (KI) available at no cost to its residents who live and/or work within a ten mile radius of a nuclear power plant, often known as an Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ). This non-prescription drug prevents the uptake of radioactive iodine, reducing the risk of developing thyroid cancer during a nuclear power plant accident.

While a wide variety of distribution plans exist across the country, Michigan provides their residents KI vouchers, redeemable for KI tablets at local pharmacies. Monroe County, with approximately 97,825 permanent residents living within the 10 mile EPZ, is associated with Fermi Nuclear Power Plant, one of the three nuclear power plants in Michigan. Despite the no-cost access of KI, only 15% of the population in Monroe and neighboring Wayne County have utilized this resource since 2009, according to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. In 2015 and 2016, a total of 130 homes and 3 businesses picked up KI.

Such a low uptake emphasized the need for improved communication with Monroe County residents during KI distribution campaigns to ensure that individuals understand its use and have sufficient information to make an informed decision. Ultimately, the situation presented an opportunity to engage the MRC in community preparedness activities.

The Monroe County MRC designed their 2016-2017 MRC Challenge Award grant to tackle this need head-on and develop the first face-to-face KI Community Awareness and Educational Program using MRC volunteers to address radiological preparedness. Their initiative is designed to raise levels of community awareness, education, response, and resilience in the case of radiation exposure for those persons living, working, or going to school within the 10 mile EPZ of the Fermi Nuclear Power Plant in Monroe.

From April 2016 through April 2017, 20 trained MRC volunteers contributed 101 hours to reach an estimated 2,000 community members with their program. The Monroe County MRC engaged 12 pre-identified community agencies and businesses to advance their project goal, and to ensure they were sending a unified message. Their partners included representatives from Monroe County Emergency Management Division, Detroit Edison (DTE), Kroger Pharmacy, Meijer Pharmacy, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and Local Media.

To date, the Monroe County MRC has attended four major community events dispensing KI to a total of 354 families, and expanded their campaign to include emergency preparedness awareness. During the largest community event in Monroe County, the Celebrate Children Festival held April 29, 2017, MRC volunteers along with two Kroger Pharmacists dispensed 130 boxes containing KI to 101 families in a four-hour period. "The key is having pharmacists at large, emergency preparedness targeted community events to dispense the KI directly. It saves people a trip to the pharmacy. In Michigan, KI will not be dispensed at PODs during a declared General Emergency at the power plant," stated Carolyn Gardetto, Monroe County MRC Planner. The partnership developed with their local pharmacists has expanded their outreach efforts.

Their extensive planning efforts, success with engaging local partners, and dedicated group of local MRC volunteers played a vital role in the overall success of their project. This comprehensive approach to the distribution of KI contributes to improving Monroe County's community preparedness and response and recovery capabilities.

MRC/NACCHO Connections

MRC Presence at the 2017 Preparedness Summit

The annual Preparedness Summit has always seen a great MRC presence. The 2017 Preparedness Summit, themed "Forces of Change: Capabilities, Innovation, and Partnerships" was no different. Fourteen separate MRC-related sessions highlighted the great work being done across the network, sharing best practices and lessons learned in today's ever-evolving public health and emergency response environment.

Leading up to the conference, a one-day pre-summit MRC leadership workshop brought together 124 new and experienced MRC leaders to exchange ideas and share knowledge. Some resources provided during the workshop include:

- [Adaptive leadership training material for MRC unit](#)
- [Building your advocacy toolbox](#)
- Updated [Strategic Messaging Guide](#) and [Use of Social Media Presentation](#)
- Official launch of [Emergency Law Inventory \(ELI\)](#) tool

Among other achievements, the Summit highlighted the 15 year anniversary of the MRC with members of the Network including MRC volunteers, unit coordinators, and program leadership.



If you were unable to attend the 2017 Preparedness Summit, or would like to review additional resources provided during the MRC leadership workshop, they are now available on [NACCHO's webpage](#).

Final Deadline Extension: Bob Cohen MRC Mentorship Program

NACCHO is currently seeking both experienced MRC unit leaders and new MRC unit leaders to participate in the Bob Cohen MRC Mentorship Program!

As part of this program, new MRC unit leaders will be paired with experienced unit leaders and will be provided with the knowledge, connections, and resources they need to become familiar with the varying day-to-day public health preparedness and response needs to support their community, as well as the resources available to them within the unit they lead and within the MRC network at-large.

The application for participants and mentors is now open **until June 16, 2017**. To complete the application, please click [here](#). Additional program details, including eligibility information and responsibilities, can be found on the [Bob Cohen MRC Mentorship Webpage](#).

For more information or questions about the Bob Cohen MRC Mentorship program, please email the NACCHO MRC Team at mrc@naccho.org.

Announcements

Call for Abstracts: 2017 NHPCP

The National Healthcare Coalition Preparedness Conference (NHPCP) is now accepting abstracts for their 6th annual conference in San Diego on November 28-30, 2017. As MRC units continue to develop partnerships with Healthcare Coalitions, this is a unique opportunity to share your unit's work around topics like Volunteer Management, Medical Surge, and Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response.

Learn more and submit an abstracts now: <https://www.conferenceabstracts.com/cfp2/login.asp?EventKey=RWWNIQLJ&UserEmail=&UserPassword=&User>. The deadline to submit an abstract is **June 12, 11:59 PM EST**.

Now Open: 2017 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards Application Period

FEMA recently announced the 2017 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards is now open. The awards highlight innovative local practices and achievements by honoring individuals, organizations, and jurisdictions that have made outstanding contributions toward strengthening their community to prepare for, respond to, and recover from a disaster.

For more information on the 2017 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards, including application materials and how to apply, visit: <https://www.ready.gov/citizen-corps/citizen-corps-awards>.

Colorado Acupuncture MRC Featured in State-Wide Magazine!

Through the use of acupuncture therapy, [the Colorado Acupuncture MRC \(CAMRC\)](#) unit provides a valuable and innovative approach to supporting mental health needs during a disaster and community crisis. Recently, the CAMRC was featured in a state-wide magazine. [Read more.](#)



Tobacco Cessation for Cancer Survivors: A Resource Guide for Local Health Departments

NACCHO is pleased to announce the release of Tobacco Cessation for Cancer Survivors: A Resource Guide for Local Health Departments. This guide details the importance of tobacco cessation for cancer survivors and features recommendations on how local health departments can use existing resources to link cessation services to cancer survivors. To download the Resource Guide from the NACCHO website, please click <http://www.naccho.org/programs/community-health/chronic-disease/cancer>.

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.