



February 21, 2018

www.medicalreservecorps.gov

Featured Article

Building Community Resiliency by Enhancing Disaster Response for Special Needs Population

The Essex County Public Health Reserve Corps (Essex County MRC) chose to focus their 2016 MRC Challenge Award on building resiliency in their community for individuals with disabilities or other access and functional needs. The Essex County MRC and the Essex Regional Health Commission (ERHC) recognized a need for additional emergency preparedness planning to help assure appropriate support for these individuals during emergencies. Their project entailed training, information and networking opportunities for local partners to enhance emergency preparedness plans and build capacity to assure appropriate support for individuals with disabilities or other access and functional needs during disasters.

The project had three primary objectives:

1. Identify and engage partners with subject matter expertise to provide appropriate support for individuals with disability or access and functional needs during emergencies.
2. Identify a multidisciplinary group of local partners drawn from government, non-governmental and voluntary organizations with an interest or role in this area to participate in a training session led by subject matter experts.
3. Conduct a training session for identified partners and initiate ongoing partnerships to address the needs of individuals with disabilities during emergencies.

An introductory training session for MRC members was conducted at the start of the project to provide an overview of the project. MRC volunteers provided input on the development of the training, participated in the training, and provided advice and support during the training event.

The culmination of the project was an all-day training event led by subject matter experts to bring together local stakeholders in a collaborative setting, which was conducted in June 2017. A total of 39 local partner organizations participated in the training session. Twenty-three were county and municipal agencies (Public Health, Public Safety, Emergency Management, Human Services, Disability Services etc.) and sixteen were non-governmental including nine provider organizations, five volunteer groups including three MRC units, a nursing school and the County Medical Society.

Attendees were provided with a folder containing an agenda, course evaluation, a pictorial communication tool, laminated TIPS for working with individuals with various disabilities and other resources. Participants were also provided with a thumb drive containing approximately sixty files with guidance and tools to enhance emergency preparedness for individuals with disabilities.

An important step in the planning process was engaging the County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and Department of Health and Rehabilitation early to seek their advice and support and to assure the program would align with existing plans and programs. OEM facilitated initial outreach to municipal OEM officials with their objectives and to enlist their support as appropriate.

The survey results from the training event were favorable with (16%) agreed or (81%) strongly agreed with the statement "I wish to remain informed of potential development of a core advisory group and related information." Additional comments included: provided incentive to review city SOPs, fill in the gaps & address our needs especially for the disabled, identified gaps in the resources that need to be incorporated into our emergency sheltering protocol, increased understanding of working with individuals with medical and special needs, and the chance to meet other stakeholders.

Because of their project and the partner training event, the Essex MRC is optimistic that the project had the desired effect to develop new and ongoing partnerships and build the resiliency in their community for all individuals.

For more information on planning for integration of functional needs support services during emergencies go to: <https://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/abc/Pages/functional-needs.aspx>

MRC/NACCHO Connection

NACCHO Announces the 2018 MRC Challenge Award Recipients

NACCHO is pleased to announce 80 MRC units selected to receive a 2018 MRC Challenge Award. This was made possible through the funding support of a Cooperative Agreement between NACCHO and the MRC Program Office, Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR). Over 240 MRC units across the country submitted applications for one of three funding categories, \$2,500, \$7,500, or \$12,500. The tiered funding levels allowed MRC units to select the funding level that best met their needs and those of the community they serve.

The Challenge Award aims to focus innovation in areas that are aligned with national health initiatives that are also significant at the local level. MRC units could propose projects that employ a number of approaches, such as educational programs, formation of unique partnerships, community outreach, and creation of innovative tools or systems. Unit leaders were also encouraged to use this opportunity to evaluate their programs and translate the processes and outcomes through research

After a competitive two-tiered review process, NACCHO selected 80 MRC units to receive the award.

- 25 MRC units will receive \$2,500 to fund projects focused on strengthening MRC unit capabilities.
- 44 MRC units will receive \$7,500 for community-based initiatives that build MRC volunteer engagement and capabilities, engage community partners, and improve community health and resiliency.
- 11 MRC units will receive \$12,500 to build collaboration across multiple MRC units, community stakeholders, or academic institutions to increase MRC capabilities, build MRC brand awareness, and develop shared resources.

[See the full list](#) of Challenge awardees and their projects.

Announcements

PHI: Call for Abstracts is now OPEN

The PHI Conference Planning Committee is now accepting [abstracts submissions](#) for this year's conference, **Connecting Systems and People to Improve Population Health**. Scheduled for August 20-23, 2018 in Atlanta, the conference theme will focus on the following topic areas:

- Topic 1: Information Systems
- Topic 2: Governance
- Topic 3: Informatics Workforce and Leadership Development
- Topic 4: Innovations and Novel Applications
- Topic 5: Informatics-Based Solutions to Improving Population Health
- Topic 6: Laboratory Informatics

View the full [topic area descriptions](#) for more information, and be sure to check out the options for the [type of abstracts](#) being accepted. Abstract proposals must be submitted by **February 26, 2018 at 11:59pm PST**

Toolkit and Research Report on Older Adult Resilience

This toolkit contains information and activities that can bring together those involved in aging-in-place support and those involved in disaster resilience efforts to improve the resilience of older adults to natural and human-caused disasters. The [toolkit](#) pdf, interactive [on-line toolkit](#), and [report](#) pdf can be found on RAND's website.

Two companion documents (a [report](#) and a proposed journal article — the manuscript is available the authors upon request) provide additional background for those interested in how the toolkit was created. To inform development of this toolkit, RAND researchers conducted interviews with public health department staff, village executive directors, and age-friendly community coordinators across the country (Shih et al., 2018).

The contents of this toolkit will be of particular interest to political leaders (e.g., mayors' offices); emergency preparedness, response, and management staff; health departments at the local, state, and national levels; and leaders of age-friendly communities and villages.

This research was sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through contract 200-2014-59627 and conducted within [RAND Health](#). For more information on RAND Health see www.rand.org/health or contact the director at RAND_Health@rand.org.

Ready or Not? Trust for America's Health Releases 2017 Assessment of Public Health Preparedness

Recently, Trust for America's Health, a non-profit, non-partisan organization, released its *Ready or Not? Protecting the Public's Health from Diseases, Disasters and Bioterrorism* report, which examines the nation's readiness to respond to public health emergencies. [Click here for more information](#)

Influenza Season: Resources and Information for Local Health Departments

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is committed to supporting local health departments in their efforts to fight the flu. We have compiled a list of resources from a variety of sources that can help local health departments prepare for and respond to this severe flu season.

NACCHO's [Influenza Toolkit](#) (accessible via the NACCHO toolbox) includes more than 100 resources, tools, and templates by and for local health departments. Specific resources include example response plans, just in time training presentations, inventory control resources, and communications templates in English and Spanish. Many of the tools address the specific needs of individuals particularly vulnerable to flu including living in long-term care facilities, homeless, children, and pregnant women, resources, tools, and templates by and for local health departments. The tools accessible with a free [NACCHO.org log in](http://NACCHO.org/log.in).

[Click here](#) to read the full article from the NACCHO Preparedness blog and access additional resources available.



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.

1201 Eye Street, NW, 4th Floor Washington, DC 20005

P 202-783-5550 F 202-783-1583

© National Association of County and City Health Officials

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.