



MRC In Touch

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

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www.medicalreservecorps.gov

Featured Article

Flu Season

You may have noticed your local pharmacies, grocery stores, schools, and other locations offering flu vaccines. Flu season usually runs from December through February, but the push to vaccinate the public begins long before that. This month we are highlighting how MRC units support public health preparedness by dispelling flu season myths and sharing how the Adams County (IL) MRC has successfully promoted their flu clinic.

Here are a few of the [CDC's Flu Season Misconceptions](#):

1. Do I really need a flu vaccine every year? Yes! An annual flu vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older, even when the vaccine hasn't changed from the previous season. This is because individual immune protection declines over time, making the annual vaccine important for "optimal" protection.
2. Is it better to get the flu than the flu vaccine? No, flu can be a serious disease. Any flu infection can carry the risk of serious complications, hospitalization or death, even among generally healthy children and adults. Getting vaccinated is the safer choice.
3. Can vaccinating someone twice provide added immunity? Studies show that there is no benefit from additional doses of vaccine, except for some high-risk children.



Adams County (IL) MRC: Maximizing the Message

In 2017, the Adams County (IL) MRC Unit #187 was awarded a Challenge Award for "Maximizing the Message: A multi-platform public health promotion campaign." This project developed a public education media campaign through social media marketing, website development, and video/audio projection. By using social media, the MRC was attempting to strengthen overall community health, which among other impacts, resulted in greater community attendance at the county's flu clinics. Project goals were to:

- Heighten knowledge of the local MRC and public health topics
- Increase MRC recruitment and increase/maintain retention of MRC members
- Research and gain insight into area demographics
- Monitor campaign reach and adjust as necessary to ensure optimal sharing of campaign materials
- Develop strategies that can be shared with MRC unit and local community public health partners

Notably, during the 2017 influenza season, the MRC's [flu clinic website updates](#) and videos used to promote the drive through flu clinic were proven to be an effective way to share information about their flu clinics, vaccine safety, cost, and insurance coverage. For example, in one [video](#), then MRC Unit Leader, Jeremy Ledford, speaks with a volunteer to promote and dispel myths about vaccination. The video has garnered 1,200 views since being posted on Facebook and several members of the community who came to the clinic said they heard about it through platforms supported and developed by the MRC Challenge Award.



A volunteer administers a flu vaccine at Adams County's drive-thru clinic.

In addition, the MRC created an [online flu clinic schedule flyer](#) for their website and social media as well as for distribution with local media outlets. Working with the local media, the MRC and health department were able to share information through 17 media events including live TV interviews, local radio stations, and print articles like this 2017 article: [Adams County Health Department hosts drive thru flu shot clinic](#), and this 2018 article: [Available flu clinics in Adams County](#). So far in 2018, 74 drive-thru flu clinic participants reported hearing about the clinic from social media, TV, radio, newspaper sources, the local senior center, flyers, newsletters. About 32%, 24 of 74 respondents, were informed via social media and TV sources.

Connect with Adams County (IL) MRC via their [MRC Website](#), [Flu Clinic Website](#), or [Facebook Page](#).

Share: [in](#) [t](#) [f](#)

MRC/NACCHO Connection

MRC Resource of the Month

Engaging Local Businesses and Organizations

This month's featured resource is Berkshire County (MA) MRC's [Organization/Business Emergency Standard Operating Guide](#). This eight page guide standardizes the process for local organizations and businesses to prepare and coordinate their emergency response plans.

Created through a collaboration between Berkshire MRC and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Berkshire MRC presented the guide at a Preparedness Brunch for members of the business community in May of 2018. The guide received a sensational response and also proved to be an excellent recruitment tool, garnering eight new volunteers who registered with the MRC at the event.

Berkshire MRC encourages other MRC units to use this or a similar asset for outreach and recruitment activities and acknowledges two Senior Public Health and Preparedness Planners, Sandra Martin (founder of Berkshire MRC in 2002) and Allison Egan, for their role in creating the resource and their longstanding support of the MRC.

Bonus: Administrative Preparedness Resource

NACCHO has published an [Administrative Preparedness Legal Guidebook](#) to help public health professionals advance their department's administrative preparedness abilities. This guidebook works to promote collaborative efforts among various sectors of public health preparedness, including legal, human resources, procurement, and other staff requirements.

MRC TRAIN: Volunteer Incentives

Volunteer Incentives: Earning Continuing Education on MRC TRAIN

More than 3,800 training opportunities are available through MRC TRAIN, ranging from the standard ([Your Family Disaster Plan](#)) to the more unique ([Introduction to Hydrogen Safety for First Responders](#)).

Although many volunteers are non-medical professionals, a sizable number are licensed professionals, who often look for training that helps maintain their licensure. MRC TRAIN offers more than [1,300 opportunities to earn continuing education](#), for physicians, nurses, health education specialists, and a host of other professions. Nearly all – 97% - of these trainings are free and can incentivize volunteer engagement.

Here are three easy ways to use these trainings to your advantage:

1. Highlight a training with continuing education in your unit's newsletter or other communications
2. Use a short online training with continuing education as a prerequisite to a unit meeting or in person training
3. Create a training plan that consists of the required amount of credits necessary to maintain licensure in your state

Remember, MRC TRAIN is here to work for you! Contact the MRC TRAIN Support Desk at mrcsupport@train.org for additional support.

NACCHO's Model Practices Awards Program

NACCHO Model Practices Awards Program

NACCHO is now accepting applications for the [2018–2019 Model Practices Program](#). The program honors and recognizes outstanding local health initiatives from across the nation, and shares and promotes these practices among local health departments through the Model Practice Database.

Listen to the Model Practices [webinar recording](#) for details on the application process. There is no limit to the number of awards given.

Online submissions must be received by 11:59 ET on December 12, 2018. Submissions can be made online [here](#).

For more information, please visit the Model Practices [webpage](#) or contact practices@naccho.org.

NACCHO Website Updates

NACCHO has revamped the NACCHO Website, NACCHO.org, and NACCHO's [MRC Webpage](#)! Take a look to check out the new layout with fact sheets, resources, and images of MRC unit activities.

If your MRC unit has images or success stories to share, please send them to mrc@naccho.org.

Announcements

2018 National Healthcare Coalition Preparedness Conference

The [7th Annual National Healthcare Coalition Preparedness Conference](#) is scheduled to be held in New Orleans on November 27-29, 2018. The conference is a great opportunity to learn about how MRC units can better engage with local Healthcare Coalitions.

The National Healthcare Coalition Preparedness Conference is continuing to grow and further expand opportunities for learning and sharing about the implementation of healthcare coalitions and coalition activities in our communities. The Conference Planning Committee invites healthcare, public health, emergency medical services, emergency management, healthcare coalition and other professionals nationwide to showcase their best practices, training models, plans, tools, and other resources that promote and advance development of healthcare coalitions and describe effective coalition work in preparedness and response.

House Passes Pandemic All-Hazards Preparedness Act Reauthorization

Last month, the House passed the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act of 2018 ([H.R. 6378](#)) by a voice vote. The legislation would reauthorize HHS to respond to disasters and threats emerging from infectious diseases and chemical, biological and other agents. The legislation reauthorizes the Public Health Emergency Preparedness, Hospital Preparedness, and Medical Reserve Corps programs. The bill still awaits Senate approval.

Healing and Hope for Children After a Hurricane

After a year of working to keep children safe and healthy after Hurricane Maria, educators, social workers, and pediatricians are seeing some rays of hope for the children of Puerto Rico and gaining valuable lessons that can be shared to help those affected by Hurricane Florence in the Carolinas or by other disasters this year. Read more about these recovery efforts on the [ASPR Blog](#).



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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