



# Region IV MRC Update

March, 2009

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## Welcome New MRC Unit!

Please welcome our newest unit:

**Twenty-First Century Youth MRC**, located in Birmingham, AL, is made up of HOSA students and other youth volunteers who serve as mentors in their schools and community events and are peer educators and advocates for the Surgeon General's Priorities.

This brings us to a total of 145 units within Region Four, 797 across the United States. If you know of a community that would like to start its own MRC unit, please have them contact the Regional Coordinator, Elizabeth Fitch, at (404) 562-4276 or [Elizabeth.fitch@hhs.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.fitch@hhs.gov). Your support for these new units as they develop is very much appreciated.

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## 2009 Integrated Training Summit Preview

The 2009 Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness and Response Training Summit is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and brings together Medical Reserve Corps, the National Disaster Medical System, the U.S. Public Health Service and the Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals. Expert faculty will present on key topics such as clinical care, leadership skills, volunteer management practices, and response team issues. Networking with faculty members and fellow participants will give access to the latest in emergency response and coordination capabilities.

While many of the training and networking opportunities at the Summit will be open to all participants, the MRC/ESAR-VHP sub-planning committee has developed a number of sessions and activities that may be of particular interest to MRC and ESAR-VHP participants. Each MRC and ESAR-VHP participant will receive an "MRC/ESAR-VHP Conference Planner/At-A-Glance" as part of their on site registration packet. Conference organizers will also send this planning guide to each registrant in advance of the Integrated Training Summit via e-mail. Don't forget that the Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps is accepting nominations for awards to be presented at the Recognition and Networking Reception on Sunday evening. The nomination form for these awards was sent out on the Listserv, and the deadline is March 6.

## Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

## **Radiation Professionals and the Medical Reserve Corps**

In February, representatives from MRC, ESAR-VHP, the CDC, and a number of national associations representing radiation professionals met in Atlanta, GA to discuss volunteer involvement in radiation response. Many states are developing volunteer programs for radiation response. While it is the hope that the volunteers are never needed for this purpose, the key to developing community resiliency is to prepare for different types of disasters including those involving exposure to radiation. So in addition to radiation response programs (some of which involve Medical Reserve Corps units), many radiation professionals would like to be involved in ongoing emergency preparedness and response activities.

### **Who are Radiation Professionals?**

The category of radiation professionals includes a wide variety of specialists who are trained to work safely with or around radioactive materials or radiation generating machines. Many of these individuals work with these materials in a healthcare or academic setting. These professionals include: health physicists, medical physicists, radiation protection technologists, nuclear medicine technologists, radiation oncologists, and industrial hygienists.

### **Why (and how) should MRC units reach out to Radiation Professionals?**

As we all know, all disasters are local. Working with radiation professionals can give your Medical Reserve Corps unit access to additional expertise as well as building your ability to respond to all hazards locally. To find out more about radiation professionals, visit: <http://www.hps.org>.

### **Why would a radiation professional be interested in Medical Reserve Corps?**

Like all of our MRC volunteers, radiation professionals are often very committed to serving their communities. Even if they do not use their specialized knowledge as part of their service to the Medical Reserve Corps, they want to help build the resilience of their communities through public health, preparedness and response activities. The Medical Reserve Corps gives them the opportunity to serve their local community, as well as the opportunity to learn new skills such as Incident Command and Psychological First Aid.

### **What is Radiation Response and how can Medical Reserve Corps get involved?**

There are several scenarios in which radioactive materials could be dispersed that could cause contamination – nuclear weapons, “dirty bombs” and incidents at nuclear facilities. In any of these events, it might be necessary to determine if people are exposed to or contaminated with the materials. It might be necessary to treat injuries and decontaminate affected individuals. It would certainly be necessary to provide mental health support to the affected community. To learn more about Radiation Response, visit <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/radiation/publichealth.asp> or <http://www.remm.nlm.gov/index.html> . For general information on radiation, visit <http://www.radiationanswers.org/>. To learn more about the plans in your state, contact your state MRC Coordinator and/or the agency(ies) responsible for Radiation Protection in your state: <http://www.crcpd.org/Map/map.asp>.

### Upcoming Events of Interest

- March 6, **Deadline for Nominations for OCVMRC Awards**
- March 10, 10 – 11:30 a.m. ET – **Public Health Law 101: Law of Public Health Surveillance, Investigations, and Emergencies** webcast, <http://www.adph.org/alphn>
- March 24, 2:00 – 2:30 p.m. ET – **Public Health Grand Rounds: The Clean Sheet Exercise** webcast <http://publichealthgrandrounds.unc.edu/>
- March 26, 1 – 2:30 p.m. ET - **Alternative Standards of Care in Disasters** webcast, <http://www.adph.org/alphn>
- April 4-8, Dallas, TX – **2009 Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness and Response Training Summit**, <http://www.hhstrainingsummit.org/registration.php>
- April 19-25, **National Volunteer Week** <http://www.pointsoflight.org/programs/seasons/nvw/>

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### Surgeon General Visits Atlanta

On February 24, Acting U.S. Surgeon General RADM Stephen K. Galson visited Atlanta, Georgia. The focus of the visit was the Healthy Youth for a Healthy Future Initiative. RADM Galson visited the CDC and local schools before leading a roundtable discussion on childhood obesity at DeKalb Board of Health. The Medical Reserve Corps was represented at the roundtable by Fulton County Medical Reserve Corps, DeKalb County Medical Reserve Corps and MRC GEM. For more information on the Healthy Youth for a Healthy Future Initiative, or to take the Surgeon General's Pledge, visit: <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/obesityprevention/index.html>.

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### Useful Tools and Information Online

Just a reminder: There is a collection of websites that may be useful to MRC Unit Coordinators available at: <http://www.furl.net/members/Region4MRC>. Recent additions include:

- [CDC Radiation Emergencies: Population Monitoring After a Release of Radioactive Material](#)
- [ESAR-VHP Legal and Regulatory Issues](#)
- [Recovering from Hurricane Ike: Texas Rebounds](#)
- [Community Health Status Indicators](#)
- [HOSA E-Magazine](#)

For regular public health and emergency preparedness updates, check out the [Region IV News Updates](#)

**Upcoming Health Observances**  
**March is National Nutrition Month™**



<http://www.eatright.org>

**April is National Donate Life Month**



<http://www.organdonor.gov/>

**April is Minority Health Month**

<http://www.omhrc.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&lvlid=182>

**April 6-12 is National Public Health Week**



<http://www.nphw.org/nphw09/default.htm>

**April 19-25 is National Volunteer Week**

<http://www.pointsoflight.org/programs/seasons/nvw/>

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*Don't forget to regularly visit the [National MRC Website](#): sponsored by the [Office of the Surgeon General](#)  
Medical Reserve Corps is a partner program with [Citizen Corps](#)*