

A Letter from the Acting Surgeon General

Dear MRC Leaders and Volunteers,

With temperatures dropping, holiday plans in full swing, and thoughts turning towards the New Year, I send you season's greetings from the Office of the Surgeon General. While this past year was an exciting year for me as I assumed the role of acting Surgeon General; it was certainly an equally eventful period for the Medical Reserve Corps.

CAPT Tosatto and his staff have quickly made me aware of the value that Medical Reserve Corps members add to their communities, as well as the incomparable asset they are to the nation. It is with the help of every MRC leader and volunteer that the health and safety of the nation has grown stronger with each day.

I am impressed by the wide range of MRC activities that support the Surgeon General's priorities for public health. Throughout the year many MRC members have devoted their time to staffing flu vaccination clinics, providing blood pressure checks, screening for diabetes and other chronic diseases, and sharing health and preparedness information at health fairs. You have touched countless lives because you devoted your time, care and expertise.

Our nation also saw several disasters in 2007, and many MRC members assisted those in need. I have heard stories of MRC volunteers participating with local health departments to staff immunization clinics following the tornado that devastated Greensburg, Kansas. MRC units in New Hampshire, New York, Illinois, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Ohio participated in local relief efforts when flooding occurred in their communities. MRC volunteers provided disaster mental health services, distributed information to flood area victims, staffed shelters, assisted with immunization clinics, and supported command centers. MRC units in Minnesota responded to the I-35 bridge collapse in Minneapolis and provided assistance at the Family Assistance Center. And more than 100 members of several Southern California MRC units provided much-needed care at shelters in response to the wildfires this fall.

The MRC program office also saw growth this year - in numbers and breadth of capabilities. With the office transitions to the Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps, the program office will continue to add staff, and develop new policies, procedures and resources. I am positive that the MRC will only benefit from the added support, knowledge and experience it will gain.

With the momentum of this past year, and with all of your hard work, I know that the MRC will live up to its theme in 2008: Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy and Prepared Communities. Thank you for all that you do!

I wish each of you and your families a happy and safe holiday season and best wishes for the New Year.

Warmest regards,
Steven K. Galson, M.D., M.P.H.
RADM, USPHS
Acting Surgeon General

2007 Year in Review

Despite a hurricane season that turned out to be less severe than expected for the US, it was still a busy year for Medical Reserve Corps units in Region IV. Early in the year, the region saw devastating tornadoes, followed by a dangerously hot summer. MRC units in Georgia, Florida and Kentucky responded to these events in their local communities.

Region IV MRC units also exercised their plans for pandemic influenza, Strategic National Stockpile distribution and reception of evacuated patients. In addition, MRC volunteers took on a variety of non-emergency public health and emergency preparedness activities, including: back-to-school medical exams and vaccinations, flu shot clinics, community forums on nutrition, free clinic staffing, community preparedness education, health fairs, and more!

Elsewhere in the nation, MRC units responded to:

- The bridge collapse in Minnesota
- Tornadoes, floods and a hazardous materials incident in Kansas
- Snowstorms and wildfires in California
- Flooding in Illinois, Ohio, Oklahoma and New Hampshire
- Ice storms in Oklahoma, Illinois and Missouri

All of these activities are in addition to the day-to-day work of building and maintaining a Medical Reserve Corps program. All of the MRC leaders and their partners are to be commended for their hard work this year – it really has made a difference in hundreds of communities across the nation. I can't say it often enough: Thank you for all that you do to make your communities safer and healthier!



MRC Growth 2003-2007, a Snapshot

	December 2003	December 2004	December 2005	December 2006	December 2007
Number of Units (National)	166	232	350	597	719
Number of Units (Region IV)	27	35	52	105	136
Estimated Number of Volunteers (National)	10,116	34,164	62,982	112,089	146,813
Estimated Number of Volunteers (Region IV)	1,939	6,547	12,069	21,596	36,086

