

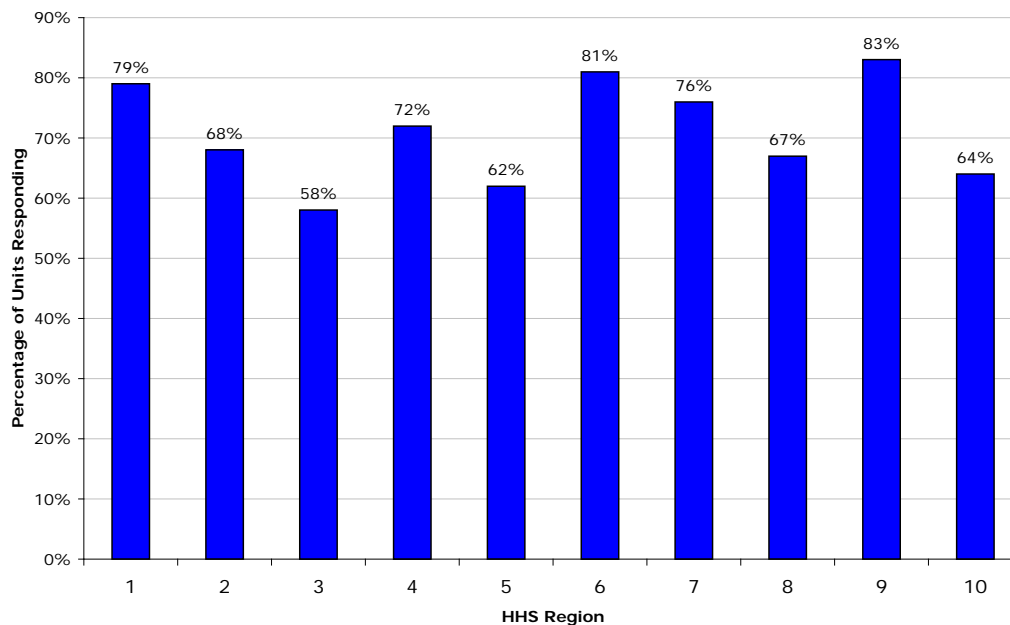


Medical Reserve Corps Units and H1N1 Influenza Related Activities September 2009

Leaders in the White House, Department of Health and Human Services and other agencies are justifiably concerned about the potential for unmet medical surge needs that could arise following widespread transmission of the 2009 novel H1N1 influenza virus this fall/winter.

At the request of the White House National Security Staff, the Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps (OCVMRC) queried MRC units about their recent and expected activities related to H1N1. In September 2009, **596** MRC Units, or approximately **70%** of all MRC units responded.

Percentage of MRC Units Responding to Query, by HHS Region

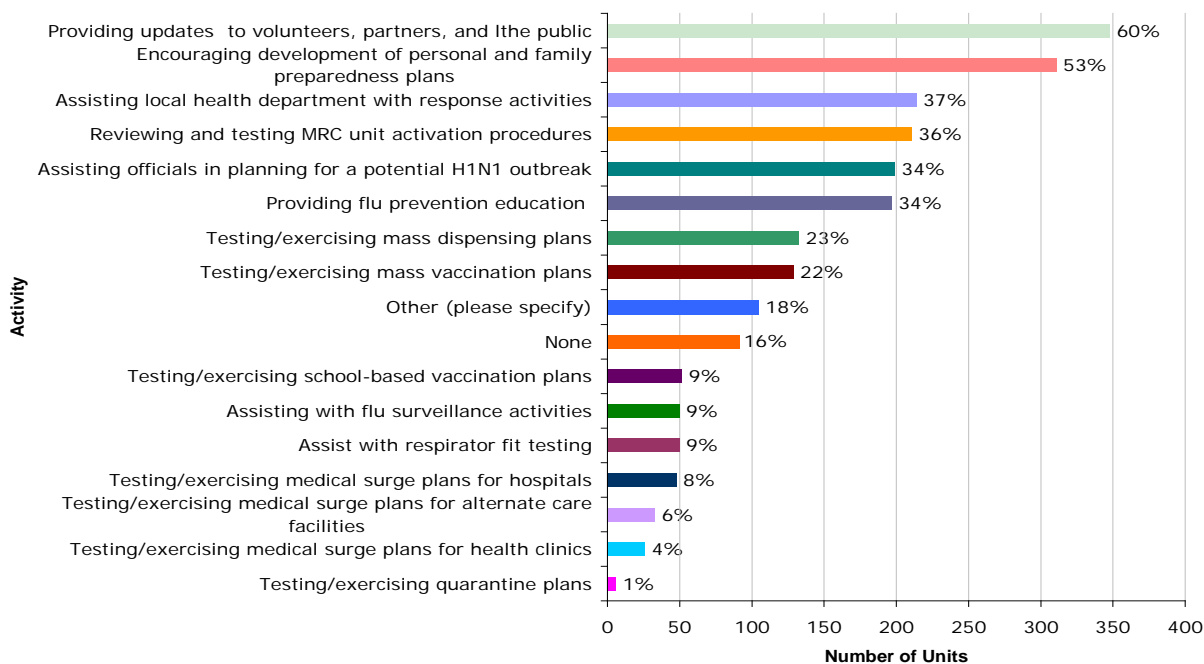


Of the total respondents, **78%** indicated that their volunteers **had been notified** that they may be needed to respond in the event of widespread transmission of H1N1 influenza in the fall/winter.

Recent Activities

MRC units are currently participating in a variety of activities related to the planning for and response to H1N1, as shown in the chart below.

What specific H1N1-related activities has your MRC unit participated in (within the past 6 months)? (Please choose all that apply)



MRC leaders provided more information regarding other activities, including:

- Other training and exercises
- Call Center Staffing
- Volunteer recruiting targeted for H1N1 activities
- Mass fatality planning

Recent Activity Highlights

The following are specific examples of MRC units' activities concerning H1N1 planning and response efforts.

Providing Updates to Volunteers, Partners, and the Public

Area Health Education Center South Arkansas MRC volunteers are distributing information on H1N1 flu to local pharmacies, convenience stores, grocery stores, and other locations.

Southern Alleghenies EMS Council MRC (PA) made 250 H1N1 bags to hand out to church members to provide information from CDC on H1N1.

Encouraging Development of Personal and Family Preparedness Plans

The Sullivan County Health Department Medical Reserve Corps (TN) participated in a Minority Health Summit by putting together a display and with flu information, clarifying the differences between seasonal flu and pandemic influenza. Home workbooks were offered to each participant attending and a door prize was put together by our MRC that consisted of a very detailed car emergency kit.

Assisting Local Health Department with Response Activities

Sacramento Regional MRC (CA) assisted Sacramento County Public Health with picking-up lab specimens from area health facilities and transporting them to the public health laboratory.

Maui County Health Volunteers (HI) members were part of a strike team sent to Molokai to respond to a flu outbreak. MCHV members conducted public education and surveillance activities.

Reviewing and Testing MRC Unit Activation Procedures

The Idaho State Department of Health and Welfare conducted an exercise to test the Volunteer Idaho System (ESAR-VHP). Based upon an H1N1 exercise scenario, it was determined that there was a need to open mass vaccination sites and volunteers from **the Eastern Idaho MRC** were needed to staff the sites. All volunteers registered in the Volunteer Idaho System received a exercise/test e-mail requesting them to respond as they would for a real life incident.

Testing/Exercising Mass Vaccination Plans

The Burlington County Medical Reserve Corps (NJ) held Surge Capacity Vaccinator Training for 22 MRC volunteers, resulting in the certification to participate as vaccinators and medication preparers.

Assisting Officials in Planning for a Potential H1N1 Outbreak

The Agawam MRC (MA) Unit Coordinators have had several meetings with the Administrative staff of the Agawam School Department for the purpose of setting up flu immunization clinics for the 4,500 students in the Agawam Public School system. Several clinics will be held to administer the H1N1 vaccine to all students K-12 in accordance with the CDC's guidelines.

Providing Flu Prevention Education

The City of Detroit MRC participated in the annual Back to School Rally sponsored by the City of Detroit Youth Connection by setting up a display to educate students and parents on

WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE FLU. The display board and handouts emphasized frequent hand washing, cough etiquette and staying home when you're sick.

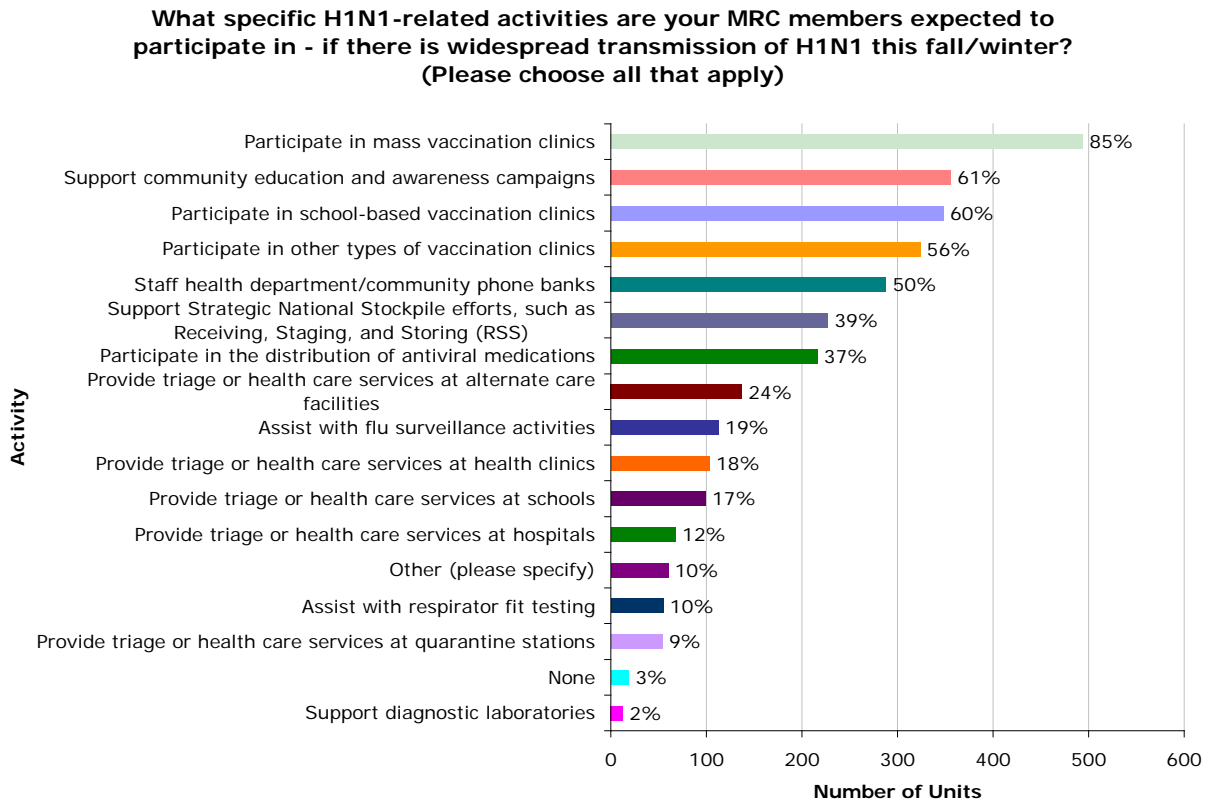
The Southeast Wisconsin MRC assisted the Milwaukee/Waukesha Public Health Consortium with its flu awareness campaign. A flu awareness phone bank was set up in the afternoon and fifteen MRC volunteers from three MRC units collaborated in staffing this call center. During this time, all metro Milwaukee TV stations carried coverage of the flu awareness information and the call center number. Scripts were provided to assist with answering questions, and reference information was also provided for difficult questions or issues.

Assisting with Mask/Respirator Fit Testing

Working with instructors from San Juan Public Health Department, eight members of **MRC of Southwest Colorado** were certified in “Train the Trainer” for N95 mask fit testing. In turn, these members will serve under the direction of the public health department to instruct other response agencies in proper N95 fit testing methods.

Planned Activities

Many MRC units expect to participate in their community’s response to H1N1, as indicated in the following chart:

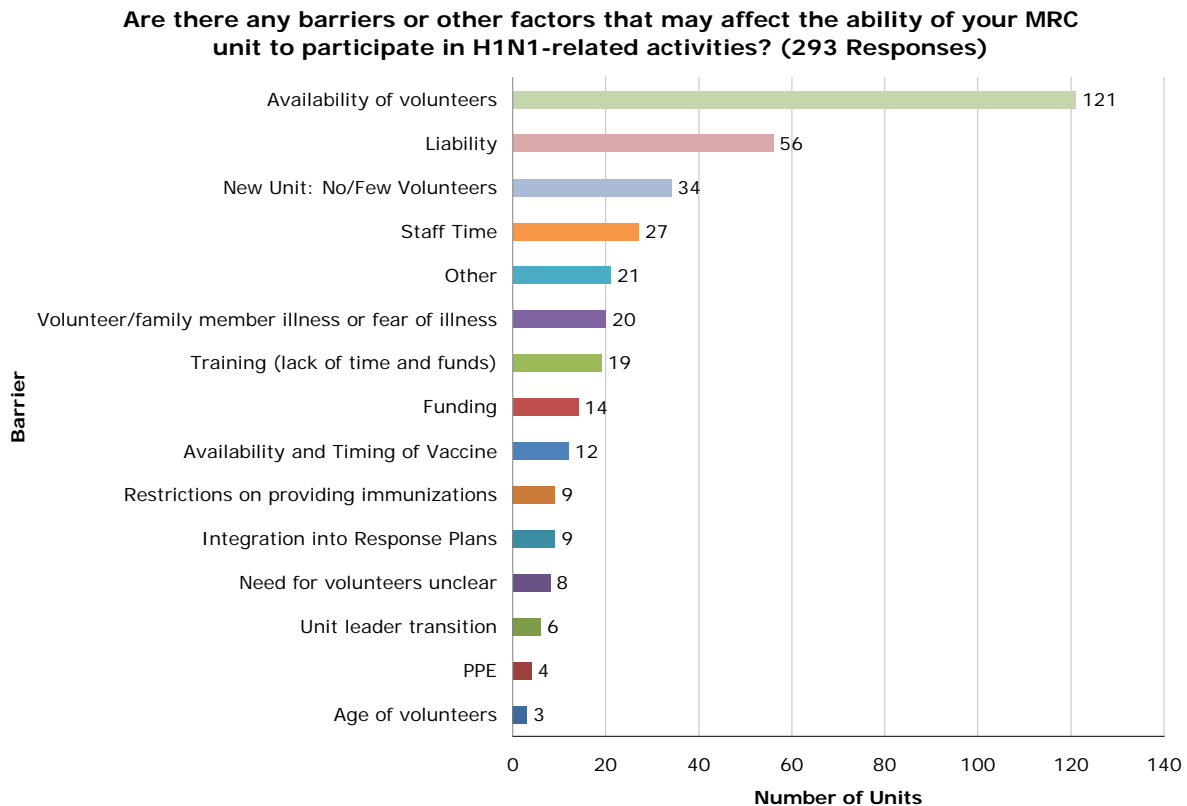


Again, MRC leaders were able to provide more information regarding their planned activities. The following were the most common other activities:

- Other duties as requested /Not yet determined
- Mental health services
- Meal delivery
- Epidemiology
- Animal Care

Barriers to Participation

MRC units reported a number of potential barriers to their participation in H1N1 response activities.



The most common barriers reported were:

Availability of volunteers – Because many MRC units have recruited actively practicing volunteer health professionals as well as other volunteers who are employed full-time, there is concern that these volunteers may not be available during their work hours.

Liability – Due to the patchwork of legal protections provided to volunteer health professionals in each state, MRC coordinators and their volunteers do not have a clear understanding of

whether volunteers will be protected from liability during training and exercise activities as well as during the response to H1N1.

Number of volunteers – Some of the MRC units responding to the query are newly registered and have not begun to recruit volunteers. Some MRC units have had difficulty recruiting sufficient volunteers to meet multiple demands within their communities.

Staff Time – More than 60% of MRC Units report that the unit leader spends 25% or less of their time working on MRC. Some MRC unit leaders find that this limits their ability to recruit, train and manage volunteers.

Volunteer or family member illness or fear of illness – Just as with paid staff, there is the concern that volunteers or their family members will become ill during the outbreak. There is also a concern that volunteer turnout will be affected by the fear of illness or of coming into contact with individuals who are contagious.

Training – Many leaders state that insufficient funds and staff time limit their ability to adequately train all of their volunteers.

Funding – MRC unit leaders have expressed that the lack of funding for staff positions, recruiting materials, volunteer training, personal protective equipment (PPE), and other items may be a barrier to their participation in H1N1 response.

It is interesting to note that, of the 293 units that listed barriers to their participation in H1N1 activities, only 28 responded that they do not plan to participate in H1N1 response activities.