

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Medical Reserve Corps Supports Million Hearts Initiative to Prevent Heart Attacks and Strokes

February is Heart Month, and many people will be thinking about what to get their sweetheart for Valentine's Day. Although the holiday is usually celebrated with gifts of candy or flowers, good health is the one thing that everyone appreciates year-round. The Medical Reserve Corps, (MRC) is teaming up with numerous other government and private sector organizations to support the new Million Hearts™ initiative (<http://millionhearts.hhs.gov>), which aims to prevent one million heart attacks and strokes over the next five years. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States as well as a major cause of disability.

“The _____MRC unit enthusiastically supports Million Hearts™ as a national effort to bring together communities, health systems, nonprofit organizations, federal agencies and private-sector partners from across the country to fight heart disease and stroke,” said _____MRC unit leader.

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a national network of local groups of volunteers committed to improving the health, safety, and resiliency of their communities. Since its inception in 2002, the program has grown to more than 200,000 volunteers in nearly 1,000 units across the United States—ready to respond to emergencies, reduce vulnerabilities, and build resiliency in local communities through prevention, preparedness and public health activities. Medical Reserve Corps units are community-based and function as a way to locally organize and utilize volunteers who want to donate their time and expertise to prepare for and respond to emergencies and promote healthy living throughout the year. The network of volunteers includes medical and public health professionals who provide healthcare and education to community members, as well as non-medical volunteers who provide leadership, logistics, and other support.

MRC units initiate and participate in public health activities throughout the year--ranging from flu vaccination clinics and smoking cessation initiatives to disease prevention through programs like the Million Hearts™ and “Let's Move!” campaigns. Not only are these prevention activities important to individual community members; they help to lessen the susceptibilities and vulnerabilities that raise disaster risk profiles for communities.

Million Hearts™ will promote innovations to identify people now at cardiac risk, ensure that they receive appropriate treatment, reduce the need for blood pressure and cholesterol treatment, promote healthy diet and physical activity, and support smoke-free environments to reduce current and future cardiac risk.

Million Hearts™ is focused on two goals:

- **Empowering Americans to make healthy choices** such as preventing tobacco use and reducing sodium and trans fat consumption. This can reduce the number of people who need medical treatment such as blood pressure or cholesterol medications to prevent heart attacks and strokes.

- **Improving care** for people who do need treatment by encouraging a targeted focus on the “ABCS” – Aspirin for people at risk, Blood pressure control, Cholesterol management and Smoking cessation – which address the major risk factors for cardiovascular disease and can help to prevent heart attacks and strokes.

“Communities can play a large role in the Million Hearts™ initiative by encouraging local leaders to develop policies and programs that enhance patients' access to care, improve medication adherence, reduce smoking and second-hand smoke exposure, and promote the consumption of foods low in sodium and artificial trans fats,” said _____MRC unit leader. “Preventing heart disease before it starts is a great long term investment in _____ (name of community) and the activities of our unit support that goal.”

The Medical Reserve Corps will be celebrating and commemorating the MRC’s 10th anniversary and its decade of accomplishments throughout the coming year. For more information about the MRC program, and to find out how you can get involved, please see <http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov>, <http://www.facebook.com/medicalreservecorps> or contact MRCcontact@hhs.gov.

For more information about the Million Hearts Initiative and its partners, visit <http://millionhearts.hhs.gov>.

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The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a national network of local groups of volunteers committed to improving the health, safety, and resiliency of their communities. MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals, as well as non-medical volunteers who are interested in strengthening the public health infrastructure and improving the preparedness and response capabilities of their local jurisdictions. The MRC Program Office, the Division of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps (DCVMRC) is headquartered in the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General. It functions as a clearinghouse for information and best practices to help communities establish, implement, and maintain Medical Reserve Corps units nationwide.