



MRC In Focus

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

www.medicalreservecorps.gov

Ripley County MRC Responds to Tornado Aftermath

An EF-3 tornado touched down in Ripley County, Indiana, and destroyed 22 homes, killing two people and critically injuring two others. Eight other people sustained injuries that required hospitalization.



The Ripley County MRC was activated by the county Emergency Management Agency (EMA). Eighteen MRC volunteers worked alongside the county EMA, Red Cross chapter, local churches, the Salvation Army, police and sheriff departments, and the Franklin County MRC to provide tetanus shots to individuals that could get injured during the cleanup and debris removal process.

“We signed up eight volunteers as a result of this disaster—people see what we do and want to join.”

MRC volunteers assisted the community by managing flow control, greeting individuals, and entertaining displaced children. Volunteers also helped with the donation center at the town hall and community center. Unit coordinator Holley Meador said that families who lost their homes were very thankful for the supplies and assistance.

Meador believes the unit was prepared to respond to the tornado “partly due to our ability over the last nine months to use the National Association of County and City Health Officials’ funds to hold trainings and

conduct drills and exercises; and equip our volunteers mentally with training and exercise activities, and physically, with first aid kits and personal preparedness go-kits.”

Lessons Learned and Takeaways

The unit’s main challenge was communication. During the first 24 hours after the tornado cell towers were inundated with calls, and only text messages could be sent successfully. “In the future,” Meador said, “we want to utilize NIXLE, a free mass text service that other county agencies in our county currently use to ‘mass’ text.”

Meador’s advice to other units is to “always have blank applications on hand! We signed up eight volunteers as a result of this disaster—people see what we do and want to join.” She also suggested that unit leaders ensure they have the following equipment and materials during a disaster response: a laminated phone roster, to protect the roster from unfriendly weather conditions; duct tape, which can be a quick solution for numerous problems; and a designated documenter, to take photos when permitted and record notes to provide a “bird’s eye view” of the incident.

Currently, the community is joining to take care of its citizens, clean up debris, and move to the “what’s next?” phase. ★



THIS ISSUE:

- MRC of Nevada Meets the Surgeon General..... 2
- MRC Provides Emergency Incident Rehab..... 3
- Building Bridges with the FBI..... 4
- San Bernardino County MRC Deploys to Desert 4
- MRCs Prepare for Future Earthquake Response 5
- Working with Local Partners through MRC-TRAIN..... 5
- Volunteer Spotlight 6
- MMU Provides Awareness of Assets and Training Opportunities 7

Scenes of the tornado’s aftermath and response and recovery efforts.

National Notes



Dear MRC Leaders, Volunteers, and Colleagues,

Partnerships are at the heart of the Medical Reserve Corps' success in building community resiliency, responding to emergencies, and improving public health. The MRC relies on partnerships to share resources and expertise, take part in outreach activities,

conduct training, and coordinate response efforts. Through collaboration with a variety of local organizations and agencies, such as health departments, emergency management agencies, hospitals and clinics, American Red Cross chapters, and other community organizations, MRC units significantly extend their impact in their communities.

The MRC 10th anniversary theme for May is "The Value of Partnerships," and it coincides with the 2012 Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness and Response Training Summit (ITS) May 21–25 in Nashville, Tennessee. The summit is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and it brings the MRC together with partners from the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), the Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP), and the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS).

This forum permits coordination, collaboration and interaction among the leaders and members of these organizations. Attending the summit enhances the knowledge, skills and abilities of participants, which in turn will improve their capability to lead and deliver public health and medical care services during disasters

of any origin. Expert faculty presented on key focus areas: Healthcare Systems, Leadership, Public Health, Resource Management & Patient Movement, and Response Integration/Operational Medicine. Networking with these expert faculty members and fellow participants, many of whom are the nation's leaders in the area of public health emergencies, provides insight into the latest information available in the area of emergency response and coordination.

The MRC provides national and local partners with an avenue for sharing resources, conducting joint trainings, providing medical and public health expertise, promoting initiatives, and much more. You will also find examples of successful partnerships in our newsletter stories. For more information about successful MRC partnerships, check out the resources and information on the MRC Web site at <https://medicalresvecorps.gov/partnerFldr/Partner>.

Please share your examples of successful partnerships, and we'll post your stories on the MRC 10th anniversary Web page. You can send them to MRCcontact@hhs.gov or include them in your next activity report. Together, we will utilize our collective expertise to create a healthier, better prepared, and more resilient nation. ★

Warmest regards,

//CAPT Rob Tosatto//

CAPT Rob Tosatto
Director

Division of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps

MRC of Southern Nevada Meets the Surgeon General

The MRC of Southern Nevada met with the Surgeon General of the United States, Dr. Regina Benjamin, at the Sands Expo Center in Las Vegas while she was in town presenting at the HIMSS12 Annual Conference & Exhibition.

Dr. Benjamin asked to meet with MRC of Southern Nevada unit coordinator Paula Martel and other representatives of the MRC. Martel gave Dr. Benjamin a brief overview of the unit and described its health priorities. Martel said, "We talked about fitness. She spoke of her Rim to Rim hike in the Grand Canyon and I let her know we purchased pedometers for every volunteer who volunteered in 2011, and that we will be participating in fitness challenges and contests."

Martel said Dr. Benjamin was very personable and easy to talk to, and she advised the unit representatives about reports that would soon be released from the Office of the Surgeon General regarding tobacco and alcohol use, prescription drug abuse, and violence among youth. ★

Paula Martel meets U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Regina Benjamin.



MRC Provides Emergency Incident Rehab

A large building encompassing an entire block burned for ten hours, blocking all main roads in the area of Portage, Pennsylvania. With 25 fire departments fighting this three-alarm structure fire, more than five blocks were used as staging areas for fire and rescue personnel. Soon, the local water supply was exhausted, requiring tankers from four other counties. With the fire raging, word quickly spread in the community. Luckily, a Southern Alleghenies EMS Council MRC-Cambria Division physician was on site and contacted the unit to request the MRC rehab team. Within minutes, the MRC received the formal request from Cambria County 911 to provide emergency incident rehab. The specialized rehab trailer arrived on the scene with additional MRC volunteers less than 45 minutes later.

The Southern Alleghenies EMS Council MRC-Cambria Division assisted EMS agencies with medical assessments using the Pennsylvania Basic Life Support protocols, provided timely training to rehab standards, and delivered additional equipment and manpower. Volunteers treated a variety of injuries to fire and rescue personnel such as dehydration, a foot crush injury, and a cardiac assessment.

Southern Alleghenies EMS Council MRC unit coordinator Sandra Jablonski said that the unit's challenges included "personnel accountability." Working with approximately 250 fire and rescue personnel from

25 agencies and four different counties was difficult. The magnitude of the situation required incident command to be used in various locations, which created a delay in the transmission of some information.

Takeaways

This was the first real emergency event for the unit. Jablonski said that the other response agencies were impressed by the MRC unit's capabilities, manpower, and environmental assets. It was evident that the MRC was both accepted and appreciated by fire and rescue personnel, which was demonstrated through positive feedback from other responders on scene. Because MRC volunteers discovered previously unknown health issues in some of the first responders, the MRC unit has since received several requests from fire departments to pre-screen their members to ensure they meet medical guidelines in the future. Jablonski concludes, "There is no better marketing tool than actual performance at an event." ★



Response and recovery efforts and rehab placement.

A firefighter responding to the 3-alarm structure fire.



Building Bridges with the FBI

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) sponsored the FBI Academic Biosecurity Workshop at the Colorado State University to teach the emergency response community about biosecurity-related issues and how to prevent these incidents through preparedness, countermeasures, investigations and operations, and intelligence. The FBI focused on the need to build both trust and communication among the scientific and security communities, and a tabletop exercise was conducted with workshop attendees, including two volunteers from the MRC of Boulder County and one volunteer from the Larimer MRC.

Volunteers learned more about their potential roles during the tabletop exercise, and stakeholders engaged in small group discussions about complex scenarios based upon circumstances common to many institutions. This was an important learning experience for the MRC of Boulder County, which would respond to a large

biological release as part of the county's all-hazards approach to emergency preparedness.

Takeaways

MRC of Boulder County unit coordinator Cheryl Runyon said that, based on the knowledge shared at this workshop, "The Boulder County MRC recommends that the local hospital and medical response (HAMR) group incorporate a biosecurity threat into a future county-wide hospital exercise" to ensure the hospital is prepared to handle the aftermath of such an event.

An MRC of Boulder County member shared with Runyon that she was "struck by how many opportunities for biological threats exist and the apparent lack of relationships among institutions" after learning about the scientific research that can be compromised, possible permeation methods in laboratories, and the threat of sensitive and classified cyber information being accessed by hackers. ★

San Bernardino County MRC Deploys to Desert

The San Bernardino County MRC in California had two interesting deployments to the Mojave Desert to provide medical care to the San Bernardino sheriff department and its search and rescue team while searching for a body buried in an unknown location. Approximately seven miles from the nearest town and facing rugged terrain, rattlesnakes, and wind, the first deployment of five MRC volunteers faced the challenge of carrying an estimated 70 pounds of medical equipment through the desert for almost a mile up a 45-degree hill.

Medical care professionals were needed for the search and rescue team in case someone sustained injuries such as dehydration, health exhaustion, or any other medical conditions while working in underground mines in the desert.

Lessons Learned

During the second deployment, MRC volunteers were more informed about their destination, the type of equipment necessary, and the type of accidents likely to occur. The next four volunteers used an ATV to carry both supplies and people, which is vital to getting a wounded person with non-life-threatening injuries out of the area and preparing them to be transported by a helicopter or vehicle.

Providing medical care in rugged terrain is not new for the San Bernardino County MRC. Unit coordinator Debbie Long said, "We have been requested numerous times to help with mountain recoveries which could include lost hikers or other situations where the possibility of someone getting hurt is very likely." ★



An MRC volunteer hikes in the Mojave Desert with medical supplies.

MRCs Prepare for Future Earthquake Response

Experts have estimated that there is a 25 to 40 percent chance that, within the next 50 years, a damaging earthquake could occur in the central United States. To ensure that communities in those states are prepared for this type of event, the ShakeOut exercise is held each year to help individuals and communities in the region learn how to protect themselves and mitigate the effects of a disaster.

Stoddard County MRC

The Stoddard County (MO) MRC educated residents about what to do before, during, and after an earthquake.



Stoddard County MRC coordinator seeks shelter during the exercise.

This was followed by a full earthquake drill on February 7th. Participants included the Stoddard County Public Health Center, Ambulance District, and local schools, as well as the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Tennessee.

Stoddard County MRC unit coordinator Tom Roy said that during this drill he realized that he doesn't "quite fit in the

space under my desk," which would be an issue during a real earthquake. Roy kept the exercise a secret from his fellow Stoddard County Public Health Center volunteers, who were caught off guard when the drill started with an announcement over the intercom, followed by the

sounds of an earthquake. Although volunteers were not expecting the drill, because "we had practiced before, everything fell into place," said Roy. He added, "No one wants to think about accidents or disasters, but being prepared for an emergency can help protect you and your family. The whole point of emergency preparation is to do as much as possible before an emergency happens."

Pulaski County and North Little Rock High School Medpro MRCs

The Pulaski County MRC and the North Little Rock High School Medpro MRC are both units located in Pulaski County, Arkansas, that joined their communities for the 2012 ShakeOut. The Pulaski County MRC tested its alert and response system so that volunteers could listen and respond with a follow-up alert distributed by the MRC call list.

With 110 North Little Rock High School Medpro MRC volunteers participating for the first time, there were challenges with getting people to sign up and answer the call down. To help anticipate this challenge in the future, Arkansas MRC coordinator Cassie Cochran said the unit will plan similar drills. She adds, "We also need to clean up and exercise our call down roster more frequently." One takeaway from this exercise was an observation made by volunteers that, if they were at their workplace and became trapped during an earthquake, they would not be prepared.

For more information about the ShakeOut, visit <http://www.shakeout.org/>. ★

Working with Local Partners through MRC-TRAIN

MRC-TRAIN (www.mrc.train.org) is an optional learning management system available through the Division of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps (DCVMRC). As a result of collaboration between two dozen TRAIN affiliate organizations, its training library connects leaders and volunteers to thousands of trainings. With the increasing number of available trainings, it is easy for MRC leaders to assess volunteer preparedness through one system.

Local training providers, including American Red Cross chapters, fire departments, and local health departments, can both promote their trainings and add them to the MRC-TRAIN training library. By posting trainings to the library, local organizations that MRC units work with can track attendance, generate reports, and better integrate with trainings in which MRC volunteers participate. Any organization can request to become a Course Provider by clicking on the

Become Provider button on the left-hand side of the MRC-TRAIN homepage.

Additional resources and information on becoming a provider on MRC-TRAIN are available on the MRC Web site (<https://medicalreservecorps.gov/searchFldr/TRAINResources>) and MRC-TRAIN (<https://www.mrc.train.org>). The MRC-TRAIN Support Desk (mrcsupport@train.org) is available to provide assistance and field questions. ★

Remember, MRC-TRAIN is FREE
(including many CEUs),
available 24/7, and on track!

Volunteer Spotlight



Judy Greengold at an Alexandria MRC event.

Judy Greengold joined the Alexandria Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) in Virginia this past year shortly after relocating to the Washington, D.C. area from New York. She was looking for ways to contribute to her community when she learned about the MRC program. Judy wanted to be part of the MRC mission and support the unit's preventative outreach and public health efforts.

As an MRC volunteer, Judy has been trained and certified in First Aid, CPR, disaster preparedness, and crisis response. Her work with the MRC ties into her work as founder of Puppet Treehouse, a creative health education and outreach organization. Her skills as professional puppeteer, director, and health educator allow her to promote health education to communities. In fact, she has utilized her puppets at MRC events to spread the word about public health and nutrition to children and their families. ★

News from NACCHO

2012 County Health Rankings

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation collaborates with the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute to produce the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program, which focuses on factors that affect the health of communities. Almost every county in the nation is ranked through the *County Health Rankings*. ★

To view the 2012 *County Health Rankings*, visit:

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org>

NACCHO's Podcast with Dr. Nicole Lurie

In a NACCHO podcast, Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Dr. Nicole Lurie, speaks about public health preparedness. ★

To listen to this podcast, visit:

http://www.naccho.org/customcf/mp3_download.cfm?dir=/upload/&file=Dr-Nicole-Lurie-Podcast-2.mp3

The Six Most Memorable SNS Lessons You Will Ever Learn in 45 Minutes

Enjoy a fast-paced sharing session where you will be intrigued by the content and format of the presentations. Six SNS planning professionals engage the audience through an Ignite format of rapid delivery of important SNS promising practices and lessons learned. ★

To view the Ignite session, visit:

<http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/SNS/ignite.cfm>

NACCHO Resources

Communications Toolkit

NACCHO's Communications Toolkit contains marketing and branding resources to help local health departments (LHDs) effectively communicate the value of local governmental public health; promote health and wellness and build relationships with the media, policymakers, and the general public. It also features tips on how LHDs can use popular social media tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, to reach their communities. To view the toolkit, visit <http://www.naccho.org/toolbox/>. ★

NACCHO Newsletters

Are you interested in receiving newsletters from NACCHO such as the *Preparedness Brief*, the Health and Disability newsletter, Tobacco Prevention and Control Update, or others? To sign up for a newsletter(s), visit <https://eweb.naccho.org/eweb> and log in. Go to My Subscriptions and click on the newsletter(s) you would like to receive. If you don't have an account, sign up for one today—it's free! ★



MMU Provides Awareness of Assets and Training Opportunities

The Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) is a mobile medical asset in Minnesota that recently deployed to the Arrowhead EMS Conference in Duluth, MN where attendees toured the MMU and were able to see for themselves the assets and capabilities the unit can provide during emergency preparedness and response. The MMU has eight beds, along with a lab and pharmacy area, in more than 1,000 square feet of movable space.

A clinical hands-on training of the MMU was completed by 16 MRC volunteers, greatly increasing their awareness and excitement for mobile medicine. A multi-agency exercise was also conducted giving MRC volunteers the opportunity to participate as both victims and responders. Applying the clinical training received two days prior, six MRC volunteers received and cared for 20 patients who were triaged into the MMU, most of whom were other MRC volunteers.

Between the full-scale exercise and the hands-on tours of the MMU, Jo Thompson, Regional Healthcare Preparedness Coordinator and regional MRC Coordinator said, "I am confident that when our region faces an event

that strains or depletes our resources, this training and exercise opportunity will have helped to create a more efficient and coordinated response. Many new and existing relationships were established and strengthened throughout this deployment; we now understand the inner workings of the MMU in such a way that when it deploys to our region for an unexpected event, we will be much more prepared to benefit from it. The relationships built, particularly among the MRC, Healthcare Systems Preparedness Program, and EMS will prove invaluable." ★



MRC physician volunteers consulting over a mock patient.



MRC physician volunteer assesses a mock patient.



MRC victim receives additional moulage between scenarios.

We want to hear from you!

We need your help to make this newsletter informative, interesting, and beneficial to MRC units nationwide. We are always accepting stories and best practices on the MRC. Remember that stories with photos are more likely to be included. We look forward to your submissions.

For the upcoming newsletter...

We are specifically requesting stories on the topics of youth engagement and disaster risk reduction. Please submit stories and photos for consideration by **June 10, 2012** to mrcnewsletter@naccho.org.

Submission Guidelines

- Please include contact information (e-mail and telephone number) for follow-up.
- If you include photos, please send as high-resolution JPEG, TIF, or EPS attachments.
- Digital cameras should be set for high-quality images using the maximum megapixel setting available.
- Photo submissions should also include a caption or description of the event.



MRC In Focus

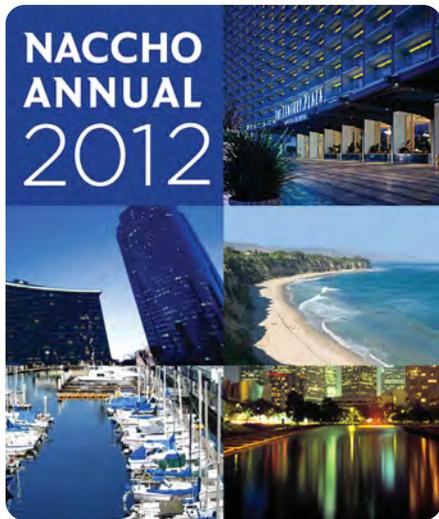
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NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

1100 17th Street, NW, Seventh Floor, Washington, DC 20036



Save the Date!

NACCHO Annual 2012

Los Angeles, CA ■ Century Plaza Hyatt Regency Hotel

July 11-13

NACCHO Annual 2012 is an opportunity to network with thousands of your local health officials from across the United States.

For all the latest NACCHO Annual 2012 information follow us on Twitter [@NACCHOalerts](https://twitter.com/NACCHOalerts).

A Look Ahead

June

National Safety Month
Fireworks Safety Month
11-17 Men's Health Week
27 National HIV Testing Day

July

UV Safety Month
Cord Blood Awareness Month
Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month
11-13 NACCHO Annual 2012
28 World Hepatitis Day

August

National Immunization Awareness Month
Children's Eye Health and Safety Month
1-7 World Breastfeeding Week