



SPRING 2007

## This Issue:

- ★ Snowed In
- ★ National Notes
- ★ Working Together to Build a Strong MRC Brand
- ★ Boston's "Everyday Heroes" Campaign
- ★ Share MRC★In Focus!
- ★ Staff Profile
- ★ 2007 MRC National Leadership and Training Conference
- ★ MRC TRAIN
- ★ MRC/NACCHO New Core Competencies Matrix
- ★ Legislative Update
- ★ Meeting Public Health Needs
- ★ Tornadoes Devastate Lake County Florida
- ★ A Look Ahead

## Snowed In: The Tahoe Forest Church MRC Comes to the Rescue

On February 27th, in Truckee, California—a small town elevated 6,500 feet in the Sierra Mountains near the infamous Donner Pass—experienced the worst snowstorm of the season. Road crews couldn't keep up with the blowing and drifting snow, which had accumulated to more than 18 inches and forced the Interstate to close. Hundreds of travelers, including children and pets, had to find shelter from the storm or risk spending a cold, dark night in their car.

With local hotels already filled to capacity, the Truckee police chief called to alert the Tahoe Forest Church MRC of the need of an overnight shelter. According to Karen Sampson, MRC Coordinator, this was the unit's first activation. About 15 MRC volunteers gathered and set up 200 cots, blankets, air mattresses, coffee pots from their own homes, and food generously donated by the local Safeway grocery store at a local middle school.

Volunteers worked from 9:00 p.m. until the last of the stranded travelers left the shelter around 9:00 a.m. However, the snow continued to fall, and by nightfall, the MRC would be activated a second time to shelter another 100

More than 300 people sought refuge at a shelter run by the Tahoe Forest Church after a debilitating storm closed I-80 for two nights.

travelers. "My MRC really stepped up to the plate," said Sampson. "Everyone pitched in together." According to Sampson, not one MRC member said "no" when asked to volunteer, even those who had to work the next morning.

Following the ordeal, those who found refuge at the shelter expressed their sincerest gratitude. "We will never forget the people of Truckee and the hospitality they extended to us and many others on that cold, stormy night," wrote one stranded couple. Many others shared the same sentiments in cards and e-mails in the days following the storm. ★

**"Hundreds of travelers, including children and pets, had to find shelter from the storm..."**



With the snow still falling, volunteers unload and set up hundreds of cots for stranded travelers.



# National Notes

Dear MRC Leaders, Volunteers,  
and Colleagues,

I would first like to thank those of you who attended the MRC National Leadership and Training Conference in Providence, RI for your enthusiastic participation. It was wonderful to meet so many of you, as well as reconnect with those of you I'd met previously. You helped to make this annual event a huge success.

The conference theme of "Forging Powerful Partnerships" proved to be right on the mark. From the relationships you established and networking you did, many of you have found colleagues to work with as you grow your local programs. Additionally, we were all able to share resources and gain many new perspectives from our partners with other agencies within the government and from non-governmental organizations. It is through shared resources and partnerships made at all levels that the MRC will continue to grow and sustain itself as a vital part of the communities it serves across the nation.

For those of you unable to attend the conference this year, I hope we will get the chance to meet in the near future at a regional MRC meeting or other event. We at the program office truly appreciate your feedback and input and enjoy the opportunity to continue to learn from your experiences, successes, and challenges. Please

look for the presentations and resources introduced at the conference to be made available on the website ([www.medicalreservecorps.gov](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov)) for your continued use and review.

As the Surgeon General announced at the conference, be sure to start using the newly launched MRC slogan—**Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities**. Those few words succinctly and clearly describe what the MRC is about everyday. And as we all begin to use the tagline to promote the program in all of our activities and initiatives, it will help to gain more recognition for the MRC.

Please continue to share your ideas, thoughts, and plans with us and each other. I look forward to working together to build strong partnerships and gain greater recognition for this amazing network.

Warmest Regards,

/CAPT Rob Tosatto/

CAPT Rob Tosatto  
Director, Medical Reserve Corps  
Office of the Surgeon General

---

## Working Together to Build a Strong MRC Brand

Can you explain what the Medical Reserve Corps does in a few words? The MRC program unveiled its new tagline, "**Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities**," at the 2007 MRC National Leadership and Training Conference. The tagline, developed by a committee of MRC representatives, is just one part of a larger branding initiative by the MRC Program Office to help build and sustain the MRC program in communities nationwide.

A strong national MRC brand—which encompasses the logo, tagline, and the messages the organization conveys—is important for many reasons. A clear, consistent brand will increase awareness of the MRC, differentiate the MRC from other volunteer organizations, help support recruitment efforts at the local level, and ensure financial and other support to help sustain the MRC for years to come.

In addition to the tagline, the MRC Program Office is developing a series of guidance documents and templates that can be customized. These resources will help local

units communicate about the MRC easily and more effectively.

This branding initiative aims not to replace, but to complement each unit's unique identity by providing tools and resources to help it tell a consistent story for the MRC as a whole. A commitment to this effort by both the MRC Program Office and local MRC units will help raise the visibility, and ultimately, the viability of the organization. ★

The MRC logo is trademarked.  
Units must request authorization prior  
to using the logo on items.

To request use of the MRC logo, visit:

[www.medicalreservecorps.gov/Member  
Resources/MRCLogo](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/MemberResources/MRCLogo)

# Boston's "Everyday Heroes" Campaign Reaches Thousands of Potential Volunteers

Spend a day in Boston, and you'll see them on the sides of buses, at transit stations, in the subway, on the Internet, and in community newspapers—Boston's "Everyday Heroes." The Boston MRC's advertising campaign, "Everyday Heroes," is reaching potential volunteers, both medical and non-medical, where they live and work.

"It's about getting the word out. People just don't know it [the MRC] exists," said Boston MRC Coordinator Brian Mazmanian.

No advertising agency was retained, and there was no budget for research. Rather, the Boston MRC looked to its own housing organization, the Boston Public Health Commission, to create the campaign using in-house staff and leftover funds from prior MRC funding years.

The Boston MRC is very excited by the level of interest this campaign has garnered. Interested residents were compelled enough to call for more information from the bus stops where they saw the advertisement. Since the launch of the campaign, more than 1,200 volunteers have joined the Boston MRC.

Mazmanian emphasized how important it is to advertise, even if it is on a small scale. For MRC units who don't think an advertising campaign is in their budget, there are many ways to get the most for your advertising dollar:

- Partner with a communications professional or graphic designer at your housing organization or look within your MRC for volunteers with these skills
- Band together with other MRC units in your region to create one campaign (most media outlets reach multiple communities in one region)
- Identify pro-bono media partners
- Look to newspapers—especially smaller, community newspapers—for advertising space they cannot fill

One of several transit advertisements designed to reach potential volunteers in the Boston metropolitan area.

## Share MRC★In Focus !

Share MRC – In Focus with current and prospective volunteers, partner organizations, and local officials. There are many ways to share MRC★In Focus: download the high-resolution PDF file, print, and distribute; e-mail the Web link; or post the file or Web link on your MRC's Web site. You'll find MRC★In Focus via the following Web links:

- ★ [www.medicalreservecorps.gov/resources.asp](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/resources.asp)
- ★ [www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MRC.cfm](http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MRC.cfm)

## Staff Profile: Gail Newell, Regional Coordinator



Gail Newell serves as the MRC Regional Coordinator for Region VIII (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, and WY). She provides technical assistance and support to the existing MRC units in the region and helps those interested in the MRC program start a new unit when there is not an active MRC in their local community. In addition, she served as the regional representative on the committee to select the MRC program's new tagline.

Ms. Newell has been an MRC Regional Coordinator since November 2004. Prior to becoming a Regional Coordinator, Ms. Newell worked as a Registered Vascular Technologist, a Program Manager in public health, and an Information Specialist and Partnership Program Coordinator for the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service.

Originally from Colorado, Ms. Newell has called the Western United States home for most of her life. Traveling through these states and working closely with people are the best parts of her job, she says. ★

A red banner advertisement for the Boston Medical Reserve Corps. The text reads: "★ BE ONE OF BOSTON'S EVERYDAY HEROES ★" in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below this, in a white box with a red border, it says: "[ Boston Medical Reserve Corps needs volunteers ]" and "www.BostonMRC.org ★ 617- 534-9200". At the bottom left, there are logos for the Boston Medical Reserve Corps and the Boston Public Health Commission. To the right of the text is a photograph of a woman wearing a white hairnet and a blue medical scrub top, looking upwards and to the right.

★ BE ONE OF BOSTON'S EVERYDAY HEROES ★

[ Boston Medical Reserve Corps needs volunteers ]

www.BostonMRC.org ★ 617- 534-9200

Boston Public Health Commission, Mayor Thomas M. Menino

# Forging Powerful Partnerships: The 2007 MRC National Leadership and Training Conference a Success

More than 500 MRC coordinators convened in Providence, Rhode Island for the 5th annual MRC National Leadership and Training Conference despite a rare spring nor'easter that brought heavy rain, high winds, and many cancelled flights.

The 4-day knowledge-sharing conference provided attendees with the opportunity to network, share regional resources and best practices, and take home "how-to's" on many topics, including volunteer management, training, communications, and sustainability, among others. All conference handouts and Microsoft® PowerPoint® presentations will be available on the MRC Web site at:

[www.medicalreservecorps.gov/resources.asp](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/resources.asp)  
(under "National Conferences")

Many thanks to all who made this conference possible, including attendees and presenters who traveled near and far, helping to make this year's conference a great success. ★



LT Marna Hoard (right), MRC Program Officer, receives the Commendation Medal from RADM Kenneth Moritsugu. This U.S. Public Health Service award is presented for a level of proficiency and dedication greater than that expected of the average officer.



Assistant Secretary for Health, ADM John Agwunobi, delivered a moving speech on the final day of the conference discussing the important role the MRC plays as a part of the country's public health infrastructure.



Missy Baxley (left) and Penny Dendy (right) of South West Alabama Medical Preparedness showcase their poster during the networking reception.



David Rykken (Palau MRC, right), with Grace Middleton, MRC Public Information Officer, traveled for more than 20 hours covering more than 10,000 miles to attend the conference. He was the recipient of a first aid kit in the scavenger hunt raffle.



Erica Arteseros (San Francisco MRC, right) wins the raffle grand prize following the scavenger hunt at the networking reception. Pictured with Ms. Arteseros are Jennifer Frenette (Region I Coordinator, left) and Cheryl Lawrence (Rhode Island MRC, middle). The gift basket included goodies from the Ocean State, including coffee syrup, sauces and mixes, and two shirts.



MRC leaders pose for a photo with the Acting Surgeon General, RADM Kenneth Moritsugu.

# MRC TRAIN: Prepared, On Track, Online!

Possessing the right blend of knowledge and skills to address the nation's pressing public health needs is essential to the MRC's effectiveness. Thus, the MRC TRAIN Web site was launched in partnership with the Public Health Foundation, a non-profit organization that develops innovative solutions by providing the information, tools, and training to improve public health performance and protect community health.

TRAIN is a Web-based tool for training the public health community. TRAIN links 23 states and the MRC into one coordinated, nationwide learning management system for all professionals who protect the health and safety of the public. Through this network, MRC volunteers have access to relevant and timely education and training that can help fulfill trainings to meet the Core Competencies for MRC volunteers. In addition, MRC units that have created training on various topics related to public health also can share their resources on the site with other members of the MRC network. Through the MRC TRAIN site, a user can:

- Quickly find and register for many courses
- Track learning with personal online transcripts

- Access valuable materials, course reviews, and discussions
- Stay informed of the latest public health trainings for specific areas or expertise

In addition, with MRC TRAIN, MRC unit coordinators can:

- Coordinate state/citywide training exercises
- Generate reports on competency-based training status and overall readiness
- Send courses, e-mail, and announcements to any/all registrants with the click of a button

The MRC will be hosting a Webinar on MRC TRAIN on June 26th. For more information about this Webinar, contact Nitasha Chaudhary at [nchaudhary@naccho.org](mailto:nchaudhary@naccho.org) or 202-783-5550, ext. 240. ★

Here's your ticket to board MRC TRAIN.

Just visit:

[www.mrc.train.org](http://www.mrc.train.org)

Create a FREE account TODAY!

MRC TRAIN provides numerous online training opportunities; many of which are associated with FREE or inexpensive continuing education credits. So don't wait another second...board MRC TRAIN and get *prepared, on track, online!*

## MRC and NACCHO Unveil New Core Competencies Matrix



In response to requests from MRC units for more assistance and direction with interpreting the Core Competencies for MRC

volunteers, the MRC Program Office partnered with the National Association for County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and a stakeholder work group to translate the Core Competencies into practical and measurable knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

The new Core Competencies Matrix represents a suggested "menu" for the training and development of MRC members and units while allowing for the flexibility to tailor training opportunities to meet local needs.

The Core Competencies Matrix is divided into three domains: health, safety, and personal preparedness; roles and responsibilities of the individual volunteer; and public health activities and incident management. The Matrix addresses specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes in addition to suggested trainings/tools and assessment.

The Matrix is in the pilot stage and will be tested with MRC units nationwide. Feedback from this pilot will be

integrated to further develop and enhance the Core Competencies and the Matrix. ★

To view the new Core Competencies Matrix, visit: [www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MRC.cfm](http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MRC.cfm) or [www.medicalreservecorps.gov/TRAINResources](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/TRAINResources)

**OFFICE OF THE SURGEON GENERAL** April 2007

**MRC Core Competencies Matrix**

**Domain #1: Health, Safety, & Personal Preparedness (continued)**

Specific Competency	Knowledge	Attitude	Suggested Trainings/Tools	Assessment
Describe the impact of an event on the event.	Identify the range of anticipated event.	Provide psychological first aid.	Acknowledge that disaster.	Psychological First Aid (PFA) (online or in-person)

**PROLOGUE**

The Medical Reserve Corps Core Competencies Matrix is a suggested guide for training MRC volunteers at the local level.

The Core Competencies represent the baseline level of knowledge and skills that all MRC volunteers should have, regardless of their roles within the MRC unit. Because the core competencies establish only a minimum standard, units may choose to expand on the competencies in order to train volunteers at a more advanced level. Units may also choose to link the MRC core competencies to other existing sets of competencies for health professionals.

The Competencies Matrix presents a "menu" of options to guide MRC unit leaders. Leaders may choose trainings from the matrix, use other trainings not listed in the matrix, or create their own unit-specific trainings based on the competencies.

Utilizing the competencies makes interpretations between MRC units more efficient by providing a "common language" in which units can communicate their volunteers' capacities to each other and to partner organizations.

**THE CORE COMPETENCIES MATRIX**

The Core Competencies Matrix is organized into the following categories:

- **Domains** are groups of competencies related to a certain topic. The domains may help you conceptualize how the competencies relate to one another. One training may cover one or all of the competencies within a domain.
- **Specific Competencies** are the demonstrable skills an individual should have in order to be activated as an MRC volunteer.
- **Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes** break the competencies down into measurable actions a volunteer should be able to perform in order to be considered "competent" in an area.
- **Suggested Trainings/Tools** are recommended trainings, most of which are available on-line, free of cost, that will enable volunteers to meet the competencies. These trainings are not required, nor is this list comprehensive; rather it is a starting point for unit leaders to consider available trainings.
- **Assessment** is a suggested method for unit leaders to assess whether a volunteer has fulfilled a competency. All competencies may be observationally assessed in the context of exercises or drills in which the unit participates.

Core Competencies represent the baseline level of knowledge and skills that all MRC volunteers should have, regardless of their roles within the MRC unit.



## Legislative Update

During the final weeks of March, the Senate and the House of Representatives passed their budget resolutions, which set overall funding limits for Federal funding in fiscal year 2008. The Senate passed an important amendment in the budget that would give more funding to health programs. Senators Specter (R-PA) and Harkin (D-IA), the ranking member and chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, sponsored an amendment to add \$2.2 billion to the allocation for health programs. The amendment passed by voice vote. ★

## Meeting Public Health Needs in the Community: DeKalb MRC Establishes Quarterly Health Forums

By partnering with an existing program at the local board of health, the DeKalb MRC (GA) has found a way to be more involved in meeting public health needs in its community. Working with the health promotion program, Steps to a Healthier DeKalb (Steps), the DeKalb MRC has organized a series of health forums for the residents of DeKalb County.

“Eat to Live,” the first in the quarterly series, focused on nutrition and fitness. More than 30 residents attended the forum. In addition to nutrition information and fitness tips, participants enjoyed a healthy lunch and a fitness demonstration. The MRC was able to draw on one of its own

volunteers, a Registered Dietitian, as the featured speaker.

The DeKalb MRC works to develop activities that support the Surgeon General’s Priorities for Public Health. Simultaneously, Steps works to prevent diabetes, obesity, and hospitalization due to asthma in the southern part of DeKalb County—an area where health disparities are prevalent. Partnering with the Steps program has been mutually beneficial, as the MRC was able to secure resources to support its public health activities, and Steps gained a pool of volunteers that they can now call on to help meet their objectives. ★

The DeKalb County Medical Reserve Corps  
Presents  
**EAT TO LIVE**  
This forum will provide tips on how to incorporate healthy nutrition into your lifestyle, eat healthy at restaurants, read food labels, and lose weight healthily.

**Date:** Saturday, February 24  
**Place:** The Gallery at South DeKalb  
Community Room, Suite 74  
2801 Candler Road, Decatur, GA 30034  
**Time:** 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
Free Lunch and Exercise Demo Included

To RSVP for the “Eat to Live” forum, please contact Bilkisu Danjaji at 404-294-3796 or email [bidanjaji@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:bidanjaji@dhr.state.ga.us).

The “Eat to Live” flier, created by a DeKalb MRC volunteer, was distributed in laundromats and libraries throughout the community. In addition, local radio and newspapers helped publicize the forum.

## Tornadoes Devastate Lake County Florida: The MRC Responds

Groundhog Day 2007 is one day the residents of Central Florida don’t want to relive. Multiple tornadoes swept through Lake County, killing 21 people and destroying almost everything in their path. In 1 day, the Lake County MRC responded to open special needs shelters, worked in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and provided support in the field. Both medical and non-medical volunteers played an important role in Lake County’s response.

After the initial search and recovery efforts by local fire, EMS, and law enforcement officials, the Lake County Health Department sent four Disaster Community Health Assessment Teams (DCHAT) to the impacted communities. Members of the DCHAT teams, including MRC

**“Both medical and non-medical volunteers played an important role in Lake County’s response.”**

volunteers, assessed residents’ environmental and mental-health needs, distributed educational materials, and administered vaccinations.

Non-medical MRC volunteers also helped in the EOC. Volunteer Joe Farago, a semi-retired volunteer with experience in public relations, helped in the EOC by answering phones, organizing news conferences, and monitoring media reports. During the first day, more than 100 calls came from news media worldwide. "Anyone in the MRC could do this...you don't need to be a nurse or doctor to get someone information," said Farago. The beauty of being a member of the MRC, according to Farago, was to be in a position to step in and help. ★



MRC volunteer Joe Farago awaits the arrival of Florida's Governor for a news conference.

The tornadoes' damage was extensive across Lake County.

## ★★★★ A Look Ahead ★★★★★

### June

Home Safety Month

3-9 Sun Safety Week

3-7 2007 U.S. Public Health Service Scientific and Training Symposium  
[www.coausphsconference.org](http://www.coausphsconference.org)

10-13 2007 National Conference on Community Preparedness: Partnerships and Collaboration Through Citizen Corps  
[www.iaem.com/NCCC2007.htm](http://www.iaem.com/NCCC2007.htm)

11-17 National Men's Health Week

20-24 American Academy of Nurse Practitioners 2007 Conference  
[www.aanp.org/Conferences/2007+Conference/2007+Conference.asp](http://www.aanp.org/Conferences/2007+Conference/2007+Conference.asp)

26 Webinar: MRC TRAIN  
<http://webcasts.naccho.org>

### July

UV Safety Month

TBD Webinar: Utilizing the Medical Reserve Corps in Local SNS Planning  
[www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/PREP-inars.cfm](http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/PREP-inars.cfm)

8-11 17th World Conference on Disaster Management  
[www.wcdm.org](http://www.wcdm.org)

11-13 NACCHO Annual Conference  
[www.naccho.org/conferences/nacchoannual07](http://www.naccho.org/conferences/nacchoannual07)

14-18 American Veterinary Medical Association Annual Convention  
<http://avmaconvention.org>

16-18 National Conference on Volunteering and Service  
[www.volunteeringandservice.org](http://www.volunteeringandservice.org)

### August

National Immunization Awareness Month

4-9 National Medical Association Convention  
<https://reg.jspargo.com/nma07/reg>

### MRC Webinar Series

The second in the series of MRC Webinars is now archived and available for viewing. "Self-Evaluation: Getting the Most of our Program" serves as an introduction to program self-evaluation and how this concept can be used to help MRC units in meeting their objectives. To view this 60-minute Webcast, visit: <http://webcasts.naccho.org>



### We Want to Hear from You!

We need your help to make this newsletter informative, interesting, and beneficial to MRC units nationwide. Share news, ideas, interesting stories, and best practices, or tell us about outstanding volunteers.

### Submission Guidelines:

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

E-mail us at: [MRCnewsletter@naccho.org](mailto:MRCnewsletter@naccho.org)



# MRC ★ In Focus

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities



## This Issue:

- ★ Snowed In
  - ★ Boston's "Everyday Heroes"
  - ★ 2007 MRC National Leadership and Training Conference
  - ★ Volunteer Recognition
  - ★ A Look Ahead
- ## And Much More...



### Spring Cleaning Should Include the Medicine Cabinet

Just like the milk in your refrigerator, the drugs in your medicine cabinet have an expiration date. The FDA recommends that you clean out the area where you store medicines and first aid supplies at least once a year.

- Discard outdated products, damaged containers, and old supplies
- Restock low or missing supplies
- Keep all items in original containers to avoid confusion



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY & CITY HEALTH OFFICIALS

1100 17TH STREET, NW, 2ND FLOOR  
WASHINGTON, DC 20036  
(202) 783-5550  
(202) 783-1583 FAX  
WWW.NACCHO.ORG

