



SUMMER 2008

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Building Community Awareness: Assisting Runners

Many MRCs find that staffing first aid, cooling stations, and providing medical assistance during sponsored races, athletic competitions, and other community events is a way to gain experience in calmer, more controlled situations that can then be applied to emergency response. These activities also provide an opportunity to promote the MRC and its abilities within the community.

Upper Merrimack Valley

The Upper Merrimack Valley MRC was one of several Massachusetts-based MRC units to partner with the Boston Athletic Association (BAA) and provide aid for runners of the 2008 Boston Marathon. The BAA provided training sessions focusing on spotting medical issues common to marathoners, and the MRC was able to function as a medical sweep team. Medical sweep teams were located near the finish line and provided initial triage to all participants who completed the race. Sandy Collins, MRC Unit Coordinator, says "The goal was to prevent incidents that had occurred in previous years, where undiagnosed runners left the race area and collapsed away from medical facilities. Not only are conditions treated more easily when recognized early, but it is much safer and more effective to handle these issues with trained medical staff and equipment in close

proximity. The MRC supported a crucial and possibly life-saving function at this event."

Collins believes that MRC members who participate in organized races such as the Boston Marathon gain needed skills for mass casualty incident responses. Volunteering gives them a hands-on opportunity to practice triage, assessments, patient and agency interaction, and additional skills which would be called into use during an emergency response. Several MRC volunteers also provided first aid and additional support at other local athletic events.

"The BAA provided training sessions focusing on spotting medical issues common to marathoners, and the MRC was able to function as a medical sweep team."

Northeast Texas

Each year, companies sponsor and decorate Port-a-Potties for the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in northeast Texas. Concerned both about hydration for runners and sanitation due to the lack of running water, 10 volunteers from the Northeast Texas MRC were on hand during this year's race to provide bottled water and hand sanitizers for participants. Although this was the unit's first time to participate in this race, earlier in the year, they also staffed a water and first aid station for a local Fun Run. Stephanie Taylor, MRC Unit Coordinator, says "The unit will definitely participate again next year," as it provides an opportunity to be more visible in the community and protect the health of participants and spectators alike. ★

Upper Merrimack Valley MRC members at the Boston Marathon.



National Notes



Dear MRC Leaders,

I often request (some might say nag) you to update your MRC unit profile on the national Web site (www.medicalreservecorps.gov). As you participate in your Technical Assistance Assessment with your Regional Coordinator, you will find that fleshing out your unit's information is much easier than

you thought. Not only is the information useful in determining your status now, it can also help to define and measure your future success.

The information you provide is extremely important to the Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps (OCVMRC), as we share information about the MRC network with our major stakeholders and national partners. Your activities, successes, and even challenges illustrate the validity, strength, and need for the MRC. I have included below a sample of the type of information we are able to pull from your profiles and use to gain greater support for the program, its leaders, and its volunteers.

Have you implemented a strategic planning process with goals and measurable objectives for your MRC unit?

681 Units Answered

Y	410	60.21%
N	271	39.79%

Does your MRC unit utilize the MRC Core Competencies?

687 Units Answered

Y	617	89.81%
N	70	10.19%

Training Plans & MRC-TRAIN: Develop, Assign, Track, Report

Multiple MRC units have already discovered and are utilizing MRC-TRAIN's Master Training Plan. This easy-to-use and helpful tool allows users to track volunteer education and promote training opportunities.

Training plans can quickly and easily be tailored to an individual unit's specific needs. This tool also provides users with the ability to combine online courses, live events, and unit-specific training into one plan. MRC leaders can choose from among the nearly 10,000 courses already on TRAIN or upload courses and live training events specific to their unit.

By assigning a unique training plan, each volunteer in a unit is aware of required and optional training. MRC unit leaders also can track individual

and unit-level progress, e-mail volunteers, create reminders, and set due dates for completion of the training plan.

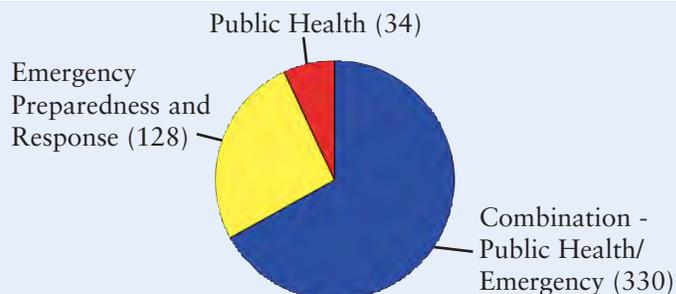
The MRC-TRAIN Support Desk (mrcsupport@train.org) and MRC-TRAIN Web site (<https://www.mrc.train.org>) provide MRC leaders with guides, instructions, and individual assistance. Remember, MRC-TRAIN is FREE (including free CEUs), available 24/7, and on track! ★

Are your MRC members included in the State volunteer registry (ESAR-VHP)?

707 Units Answered

Y	276	39.04%
N	431	60.96%

Unit Focus



As you can see, this information can be used and presented in a number of ways to show where the MRC network stands on a variety of issues. Obviously, there are still gaps, but remember that as more units answer, the more solid our statistics will be. Thank you for your input and for updating your unit profiles. You help to make our jobs easier by arming us with the information we need to promote, expand, and strengthen the MRC network. Keep sharing! ★

Kind regards,

/CAPT Rob Tosatto/

CAPT Rob Tosatto
Director

Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps

Floods in the Midwest

Many Midwestern MRC units were activated in response to major flooding throughout the region. Along with the units featured below, additional responders included the Adams County (IL), Johnson County (IN), and Douglas County (IL) MRCs. Additional units throughout Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin were placed on standby.

Texas County (MO) MRC

In March, the Texas County (MO) MRC responded to a request for assistance from another Missouri community after it was damaged by rising flood waters. Traveling more than 100 miles to Piedmont, MO, the MRC volunteers were able to provide patient assessments, first aid, physician referrals, and medication replacement to community members located in an emergency shelter. Volunteers also coordinated with the Wayne County Health Department in providing tetanus shots and with the Department of Family Services, American Red Cross, and various faith-based organizations.

Despite limited channels of outside communication, the MRC was able to provide assistance (both medical and informative) to community members taking refuge in the emergency shelters. Terry Bruno, MRC Unit Coordinator, says, “Our unit had not specifically trained for response to floods, and deploying outside of our region in an area where we did not have pre-existing relationships with other agencies was more difficult. However, the community and other response agencies responded quickly with help and donations. For future responses, we will always fully deploy with not only medical, but support personnel and adequate supplies.”

South Central (MO) MRC

The South Central (MO) MRC was on standby to relieve the Texas County MRC but received notification that floodwaters were receding. Jodie Waltman, MRC Unit Coordinator, says “Missouri has been the site of multiple weather-related disasters recently, including ice storms, tornados, and heavy flooding. Because of this, on the state level, we are discussing interactive training with DMAT teams, with the intention of jointly deploying and utilizing MRC volunteers as backfill personnel.” Waltman also discussed the importance of coordination and cooperation with state agencies, disaster relief, and faith-based organizations, particularly for MRC units located in rural, multi-county jurisdictions such as South Central and Texas County.

University of Minnesota MRC

Floods continued to be a problem for Midwest states into early summer, affecting multiple states including portions of Iowa. In late June, the University of Minnesota MRC received a request through EMAC for veterinary assistance in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



More than 700 household pets, predominantly dogs and cats, were being held at an emergency animal rescue shelter. The University of Minnesota MRC was able to send three shifts of its Veterinary Med strike team (a total of five veterinarians, three vet technicians, and three veterinary students) to assist with animal care needs such as intake, treatment, and exams. Families began picking up missing pets in mid-July. However, due to the large number of displaced animals, the MRC also was providing animal health assessments, which would allow the pets to be transferred to shelters across state lines. Having previously deployed to assist with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Kathy Berlin, MRC Unit Coordinator, says “Any response, even a local one, has logistical issues. Working through EMAC and maintaining clear communication with both your personnel and the site directors is very important and makes the deployment go much smoother.” ★



Johnson County (IN) MRC volunteers participate in a tetanus clinic for flood-affected residents.

“Hearts Apart”: Unit Focus - New Mexico

Hearts Apart is a program that was started to offer support to spouses of veterans stationed overseas, with special emphasis on spouses of those involved with Operation Iraqi Freedom. Kit Elliot, an Albuquerque-University of New Mexico MRC volunteer, was one of the founding members. Hearts Apart features monthly activities for the families of veterans, specifically those at Kirkland Air Force Base, fund-raisers, blood drives, and more. MRC volunteers provide mental health support at these gatherings, coordinate activities, assist with blood drives, and are working with the New Mexico Veterans Integration Service to provide consolidated information on resources for veterans and their families.

Kitty Juul, MRC Unit Coordinator, says “The mission of the MRC is to assist communities during emergencies and to assist with ongoing public health efforts, and for the Albuquerque-UNM MRC, this includes addressing mental health issues. Veterans are coming back hundred-fold, and many MRC units have the resources that can address some of the issues faced by both veterans and their families.” Hearts Apart specifically focuses on the familial aspect, as veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and other ailments may need specialized care that the MRC is not equipped to provide.

Juul recommends that MRC units interested in providing support activities for veterans and their families first

explore what active resources are available in their community and then work on partnering with existing organizations to avoid duplication of services. The Hearts Apart program includes not only MRC volunteers, but individuals from the American Red Cross, Blue Star Mothers, the Civitan Club, and the Paralyzed Veterans Association.

Along with Hearts Apart, the Albuquerque-UNM MRC also has recently been involved in responses to fires in New Mexico, established clinics in American Red Cross shelters, assisted with caring for special needs populations, and provided first aid support at community fund-raiser events, such as breast cancer and diabetes walks. ★



NM State Guard and Albuquerque-UNM MRC members volunteered for Hearts Apart.



Children of deployed soldiers made cards to send overseas at an MRC-sponsored Hearts Apart event.

New Resources

The WMD Technical Emergency Response Training Course is a 4-day training course providing an overview of the terrorist threat and potential targets and seminars in chemical, biological, radiological, and explosive hazards that may be used in CBRNE incidents. For more information, visit: <https://cdp.dhs.gov/resident/tert.html>.

The New Mexico Center for Development and Disabilities has released the 2nd edition of Medical Disability Tips. The Tips include quick, easy-to-use procedures for assisting persons with disabilities during emergencies and during routine encounters. For more information, contact Barbara Hussey at 505-272-6247.

An Introduction to Points of Dispensing (POD) Course designed to familiarize POD workers and public health personnel with the basic purpose, constitution, and operations of a POD during a disaster is now available online. To enroll, visit: <http://lms.southcentralpartner ship.org/scphp?productID=prcdt000000000001098>.

“Indicators in Progress in Local Public Health Preparedness,” a research brief describing the results of a recent NACCHO-conducted survey of the progress of

preparedness in local health departments, is now available online at <http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/index.cfm>.

Presentations, workshop materials, and tools from the 2007–2008 Regional Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) meetings are now available online at: <http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/sns.cfm>. Additional SNS tools developed by the Texas Department of State Health Services also are available at <http://www.snstools.info> (login: sns, password: tools).

The Resource Guide for Public Health Preparedness is a blog that features articles, guidelines, proposals, reports, and guidebooks relevant to public health preparedness. For more information, visit: <http://www.phpreparedness.info/>.

Promising Practices: Pandemic Preparedness Tools is a collection of more than 150 practices that aim to enhance public health preparedness for an influenza pandemic and conserve resources by sharing promising practices. For more information, visit: <http://pandemicpractices.org/practices/article.do;jsessionid=E382CE47E355C6033A24CF55ACB4CA57?page=home>. ★

MRC Spotlights



Pat Adams,
Southwest
Wisconsin MRC
Training Officer/
Racine County
Unit Coordinator.

Volunteer Spotlight

In addition to being the Training Officer for the Southeast Wisconsin MRC, in which position she conducts monthly training on the MRC core curriculum and additional courses for first responders, Pat Adams also serves as the Racine County MRC Unit Coordinator. Currently employed by the U.S. Postal Service, Adams is certified as a nurse and a surgical, x-ray, emergency room, and cardiac technician. MRC Coordinator Linda Botts describes Adams as a huge asset to the Southeast Wisconsin MRC. She states, “In addition to her duties as

training officer, Pat is a tireless promoter of the MRC and is always on the lookout for new opportunities for the unit to take part in. She is enthusiastic and always willing to help out on anything, from paperwork to coordinating events.”

Unit Spotlight

The Texas County MRC, founded in December 2006, functions as the main source of volunteer support for the

healthcare community in their rural, southern Missouri location. Gary Brown, Region VII Coordinator, says “This unit is extremely active and an asset to the communities it serves. Both the unit coordinator and the volunteers are enthusiastic and highly motivated.” The Texas County MRC has recently participated in a point of distribution exercise, and was activated to help respond to floods in a neighboring jurisdiction this spring. The unit has a robust training program and plans to continue focusing on providing training to their volunteers and promoting the benefits and uses of the MRC to the broader community.

Organization Spotlight

The American Medical Association’s Center for Public Health Preparedness and Disaster Response supports the disaster response community by providing training opportunities and distributing Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness, the first comprehensive journal emphasizing public health preparedness and disaster response for all public health professionals. The Center provides free Electronic Core Disaster Life Support Training (eCDLS) for MRC members, and beginning in December 2008, will have dedicated coverage of MRC unit activities in its journal. For more information about the Center, visit: <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/6206.html>. ★

“Operation Sunrise”: Unit Focus - California

“Operation Sunrise,” a 36-hour dynamic training exercise involving multiple disaster response agencies, was held in July 2008. This exercise allowed Ventura County MRC volunteers and several other California MRC units to participate in hands-on training and mini-exercises in real time. Designed to be as realistic a disaster response scene as possible, the exercise included a bus explosion, special effects provided by a Warner Brothers representative, and faux victims. The extended 36-hour timeframe also allowed the MRC and other participating agencies to practice shift switches, meals, and other practicalities frequently unpracticed before a major disaster.

More than 500 cross-agency volunteers were expected to attend this year’s training. Attendees came from CERT, DART, Ventura County public health, local hospitals, and more. Because of the large number of attendees, Operation Sunrise also served as a promotional and recruitment opportunity for the MRC. According to MRC Unit Coordinator Dan Wall, the Ventura County MRC typically receives 10–12 volunteer applications per event attended and expected much larger numbers from this exercise.

Operation Sunrise is the follow-up to last year’s “Operation Sunset,” a 24-hour event designed to test responders’ ability to function in realistic scenarios and utilize equipment purchased for emergency response. After the inaugural training, organizers recognized the

need for more certified volunteers and equipment and thus have expanded recruitment and training efforts throughout the county, particularly through the MRC.

Dan Wall, Training and Education Coordinator for the Ventura County Emergency Preparedness Office and MRC Unit Coordinator, was one of the organizers for the initial event. He says “The MRC existed at the time of Operation Sunset, but upon realizing the need for additional volunteers, the unit has become much more integrated into the training process. We’ve also developed a strong relationship with the Ventura County EMS. It’s critical for MRC units to make contact with the EMS in their communities; the link is invaluable for promotion and marketing of the unit, as well as establishing authority.” ★

Diane Dobbins and Barbara Spraktes prepared to teach an Alternate Care and Shelter class.



Dr. Narayan Nair, Office of the Surgeon General, being shown the California medical volunteer system by Randy Linthicum.

A New Generation of Volunteers: MRC and HOSA

The Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) organization, with more than 90,000 members, is designed to promote careers in the healthcare industry and enhance the quality of overall healthcare. With chapters located nationwide, many MRC units are finding local HOSA and other student healthcare organizations are a great way to recruit young volunteers.

The Southeast Tennessee MRC is just one example of a successful MRC-HOSA partnership. Volunteers for the MRC conducted core competency training for all HOSA students in eight local schools and additional students in health classes and a JROTC program. Students received the training during regular class time and were encouraged to go online to receive FEMA certification. Upon completion of the basic training, students also were given the opportunity to become MRC volunteers. Almost 600 student volunteers joined the Southeast Tennessee MRC in the first year of the program.

Robert Crane, Volunteer Coordinator, says “The students and teachers were both very excited about the MRC and the training we were able to provide. Students are able to add their community service and applicable training to their college applications and resumes, while also receiving the satisfaction of helping to build their communities’ resiliency. I, as Volunteer Coordinator, am very excited about the opportunity to train and develop our leaders of tomorrow in disaster management.”

This collaboration was so successful that the MRC has been asked to offer not only the basic MRC core competency training, but additional courses in CDLS, triage, disaster mental health, and more. Other schools in the region also have asked to be included. Exercises specifically aimed at youth volunteers are under development, as well as plans to integrate students into ongoing MRC training, drills, and activities. ★

NACCHO UPDATE

National Association of County & City Health Officials

In 2006, the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) was awarded a 3-year cooperative agreement to assist the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General’s Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps in enhancing MRC units’ ability to meet local, state, and national needs. The third year of the agreement went into effect on August 1, 2008.

The extension of the cooperative agreement allows NACCHO to continue providing support and services to MRC units, including coordinating and distributing grant funding; publishing national newsletters; planning regional and national meetings; and developing materials, resources, and tools to strengthen the knowledge and skills of MRC members. In addition, NACCHO is able to promote the MRC and its ability to assist with public health initiatives to local health departments.

As part of the cooperative agreement, NACCHO hosts the application and approval process for the Capacity Building Awards (CBA). Last year, 513 units were approved for CBAs totaling more than \$3 million.

Applications for CBAs for the 2008–2009 funding year are available online through September 15. Eligible applicants for the \$5,000 to \$10,000 (previously unfunded units) awards are leaders of registered MRC units with recently updated profiles housed in organizations that are not barred from receiving Federal funds. Applications must include letters of support, projected activities, realistic budgets, and training plans. For more information about the CBAs and how to apply, visit: <http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MRC/CBA.cfm>.

For more information about NACCHO, its connection to the MRC program and public health initiatives, please visit: <http://www.naccho.org>. ★

New MRC Focuses on Partnerships/Drills: Unit Focus - Alaska

Ketchikan, Alaska, a city of less than 10,000 residents and a popular cruise ship destination, formed their MRC unit in early 2007. Previous to official registration of the unit, volunteers were already involved in “Evac-Alt,” a full-scale evacuation and alternative care exercise followed by a mass immunization clinic with partners

from public health, Ketchikan General Hospital, and the Ketchikan Indian community. Subsequent exercises hosted by Ketchikan included responses to fires and an ammonia spill.

In their grant application, Ketchikan focuses on their ability and need to maintain partnerships. “There are

dozens of partners we work with on a regular basis. We operate regionally and statewide because of our unique geographical situation. Our motto is: ‘Know your counterparts, Know their capabilities’ and we believe it’s easier to get to know someone over a cup of coffee than at the scene of a disaster.”

Continued on next page

Assistant Fire Chief Jim Hill says, "After watching coverage of the bridge collapse in Minneapolis where volunteers had to be turned away, we realized that we needed a coordinated volunteer response to emergency situations. Our MRC volunteers are trained not only in MRC core competencies, but in the basics for the Citizen Corps and other available

training. As a small town with a large visitor population, we have to be prepared."

Upcoming events for Ketchikan's MRC include hosting the Region X MRC Conference in September and a large-scale maritime disaster exercise conducted in conjunction with local response partners and Holland America Line® cruise lines. ★

Tornado Response

Wisconsin Disaster Medical Response Team

Volunteers from the Wisconsin Disaster Medical Response Team (WDMRT) MRC, including medical technicians and a veterinarian, were activated to respond following a tornado in Hugo, Minnesota. The WDMRT MRC, housed within a K-9 Emergency Response Team, was able to provide medical support as volunteers searched collapsed buildings, rubble piles, and more for injured community members. The MRC also was able to assist with the search efforts and provide care for the K-9 rescue dogs. All residents were accounted for, and 50 structures were cleared by the end of the first full day after the tornado.

Shawn Metzner, MRC Unit Director, says "Being hosted by a K-9 unit allows our MRC unique opportunities to participate in disaster services at a local level. Often, our unit is involved in supporting search and rescue operations."

The WDMRT MRC is located approximately 200 miles from Hugo; however, volunteers were attending a K-9 Search and Rescue seminar in Wisconsin when the tornado struck. Multiple agencies present at the seminar activated and participated in the joint response.

Western Tidewater (VA/NC) MRC

Amy Tyle, Unit Coordinator of the Western Tidewater MRC, had only been on the job for 6 weeks when a major tornado struck Suffolk, Virginia. While an MRC unit had previously existed in the area, it was in the process of being revamped, so Tyle reached out to MRC units from the surrounding region for help.

Volunteers were able to treat injuries incurred during cleanup, go door-to-door to provide tetanus shots, assist with case management, and participate in an "After the Disaster" town hall meeting designed to assist the community with recovering from the effects of the tornado strike. Tyle states, "Coordinating the volunteers from various agencies was the main role of the Western Tidewater MRC. We had mutual aid agreements already in place, but found that each jurisdiction had different activation statuses and policies. We're now developing a master list for the Hampton Roads and northern North Carolina region that will list all of these policies to assist in future joint responses." ★

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.

Submittal 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 megapixel setting available.
- Photo submissions also should include a caption or description of the event.

E-mail us at: MRCnewsletter@naccho.org

★ ★ ★ A Look Ahead ★ ★ ★

September

National Preparedness Month

<http://www.ready.gov>

America on the Move September Campaign

<http://www.americaonthemove.org>

8-11 NEMA 2008 Annual Conference

<http://www.nemaweb.org/home.aspx>

9-12 NACCHO/ASTHO Annual Conference

http://www.naccho.org/events/ASTHO-NACCHO_2008.cfm

24-26 Health Emergency Medical

Countermeasures Enterprise (PHEMCE)

Stakeholders Workshop 2008

<http://www.hhs.gov/aspr/barda>

October

20-24 National Health Education Week

<http://www.nche.org>

25-29 American Public Health Association

Annual Meeting and Exposition

<http://www.apha.org/meetings/>

29-31 10th Annual Technologies for Critical

Incident Conference and Exposition

<http://www.ctc.org>

November

13-16 Harm Reduction Coalition Conference

15-20 IAEM 56th Annual Conference &

EMEX 2008 Conference

<http://www.iaem.com/events/annual/intro.htm>

20 Great American Smokeout





MRC ★ In Focus

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

www.medicalreservecorps.gov



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- And More...



MRC-In Touch

MRC-In Touch, a monthly e-newsletter available to all MRC volunteers and interested parties, will release its first edition this summer. Interested in receiving? Sign up for the One-Way ListServ at:

www.medicalreservecorps.gov

