

WINTER 2007

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Partnership on Two Wheels

How do you get medical supplies or personnel from point A to point B through traffic jams, flooded roads, or other hazards? Motorcycles can often go—and go quickly—where four-wheeled vehicles cannot. This is where the idea to enlist local motorcycle riders to volunteer their services to the MRC was born.

Kane County Illinois Medical Reserve Corps and a local non-profit, Biker4Biker, have joined forces to recruit and train bikers to help the county in the event of a disaster. These volunteer bikers are now part of Kane County’s new “Rescue Rider” program.

This unique partnership was the brainchild of Patrick DeMoon, Kane County Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator. DeMoon felt there should be a way to get supplies to areas in need when roads are closed or blocked. Motorcycles, he thought, could be just the right vehicle to do the job.

After reading a local newspaper article about the charitable organization Biker4Biker, a non-profit group which works to coordinate fund-raising efforts for area motorcyclists and their families in need of help, DeMoon contacted the group’s founder, Dean Akey, with his idea. “What better group than bikers who are already helping people?” said DeMoon.

Kane County MRC Rescue Riders prepare to test their first aid skills at one of five stops on their “Preparedness Run”

Since the partnership formed, more than 30 local bikers have become MRC Rescue Riders volunteers. “It’s a great way to attract non-traditional volunteers,” said Akey. “These volunteers make the core group (MRC) more efficient.” The riders have been trained in CPR, the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), and first aid. They recently participated in the first Preparedness Run sponsored by the Kane County Medical Reserve Corps and Fox Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross.

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Modeled on “Poker Runs,” participants of the Preparedness Run traveled to five stations where they were given an emergency preparedness-related task to complete. Once the task was completed successfully, the riders were given a playing card. At the end of the day, riders with the best poker hand won a prize. This event not only affirmed the first aid skills volunteers learned in earlier trainings and allowed them to practice

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National Notes

Dear MRC Leaders, Volunteers,
and Colleagues,

We are excited to deliver this first edition of **MRC★In Focus** to you. Through our collaboration with the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), we are looking at several ways to build capacity among all MRC units. We see this quarterly publication as a way to improve awareness and understanding of the MRC, share best practices, provide information about new resources and upcoming events, and bring big news to light. I encourage you to share this with your volunteers and partners to further educate them on what the MRC is doing at the national, regional, state, and local levels. We designed **MRC★In Focus** to be a tool to link MRC units, partners, communities, and our national network more closely.

The MRC network grew tremendously in 2006, with almost 250 new units being registered with the Office of the Surgeon General (a rise of 70%). And, thanks to

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your recruitment efforts at the local level, we saw an equally dramatic increase in the number of volunteers—an 81% rise to over 112,000 MRC members. These percentages demonstrate that more and more communities and individuals across the nation have committed themselves to the MRC concept, and are working hard to improve the health and safety of their local areas.

All of us—at all levels—have worked hard to establish the very necessary relationships with

our partner organizations. Leveraging these relationships has gained greater support and better resources for MRC units. National-level partnerships with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Health Resources and Services Administration, Citizen Corps, and the Metropolitan Medical Response System have enabled local MRC units to garner shared resources and even funding support from these programs.

Leveraged relationships with non-governmental organizations also benefit the MRC network. For example, the MRC cooperative agreement with NACCHO not only builds the capacity of MRC units, but also strengthens the ties between the MRC at all levels and the nation’s public health system. Our cooperative agreement with the National Association of Local Boards of Health is designed to provide local boards with information on the MRC, especially focusing on how boards can better support or assist an MRC in their community.

All of these leveraged relationships improve the sustainability of this national network of organized and prepared MRC units. You are all vital players in this effort. From the ground level up, we are working together to make powerful advancements for the Medical Reserve Corps program’s ability to not only sustain itself, but also continue to grow in strength and numbers.

In another section of this newsletter, you will find information about the recently passed **Pandemic and All**

Hazards Preparedness Act, which President Bush signed into law in December. This law establishes an “all-hazards” approach to public health preparedness, rather than focusing exclusively on acts of bioterrorism. But, most importantly for us, it codifies the MRC, which gives us sustainability at the Federal level.

At the national level we are continuing our work to provide MRC units with the tools and resources necessary to be successful at the local level. You asked for financial support and we found a way to provide it through our cooperative agreement. We also look forward to supporting the networking and information sharing that will occur at the MRC National Leadership and Training Conference this April in Providence, RI.

The great success of the MRC program really belongs to you. Without your community public health, preparedness, response, and outreach activities, the program would not be nearly as visible or viable. On behalf of the national and regional staff, as well as NACCHO, I wish to thank you all for your constant dedication and ongoing support in making America healthier and stronger; one community, city, county, and state at a time. Together, we are improving the lives of many across the nation!

Warmest Regards,

/CAPT Rob Tosatto/

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



MRC Webinar Series

The MRC Program Office is introducing a series of Webinars to provide information on a wide variety of topics for MRC leaders, volunteers, and others interested in the MRC. A Webinar is a seminar conducted over the Internet that is live and interactive between the presenter and the audience.

MRC Webinars are slated to occur every 6–8 weeks, beginning in February 2007. The first topic will be:

Title: MRC 101
Presenter: LT Marna Hoard, Program Officer,
MRC Program

Session Description: This is an introductory overview of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) program and is intended for anyone interested in learning about the MRC and helping meet their community's health needs.

For more information on the MRC Webinar Series, please visit www.medicalreservecorps.gov or www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MRC.cfm. Or, look to future editions of MRC★In Focus.

Mid-America MRC Provides Surge Capacity for Local Veterans Affairs Medical Center

The Mid-America MRC, located in the Kansas City area, has begun a new partnership with the Kansas City Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center to assist with backfill and surge capacity. Following Hurricane Katrina, the VA Medical Center found it was short on personnel when its staff went to help. With this new agreement, facilitated by National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), volunteer medical staff from the MRC can fill the void in the Medical Center when its staff has to go elsewhere. In return, the MRC has made arrangements for its volunteers, both medical and non-medical, to train at the hospital and earn CEU credits. In addition, the MRC unit will have access to the Medical Center's collection of films and videos that can be shown for volunteer training. ★

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Partnership...

navigating roads in a simulated emergency situation, but also proved to be a lot of fun. A second Preparedness Run in Kane County is planned for the spring of 2007.

“With over 6.6 million motorcycle owners and thousands of clubs nationwide, the Rescue Riders program has room to grow.”

In addition to CPR and first aid, DeMoon is planning to train the Rescue Riders for crowd and traffic control duties to free up first responders in the event of an emergency. The Rescue Riders will be trained to help calm crowds and spot individuals who are in need of help. DeMoon is also working to map out where in the area the MRC Rescue Riders are living to be able to call on the nearest volunteers to respond to an emergency.

With over 6.6 million motorcycle owners and thousands of clubs nationwide, the Rescue Riders program has room to grow. Similar programs are beginning in Illinois and New York and this program has the potential to be replicated by MRC units nationwide. If an MRC unit is interested in starting a similar program, DeMoon and Akey recommend first checking with existing volunteers to see if there are any interested riders. Local motorcycle dealerships are also a good contact to help find local clubs and organizations to partner with. For example, the Harley Owners Group (H.O.G.) has over 1,000,000 members in more than 1,000 chapters, each of which are sponsored by a local Harley-Davidson dealership. Similar groups exist for Yamaha and Honda riders. Then, set up a speaking engagement at a club meeting to promote the concept.

As far as volunteer recruitment, Akey says the media is the biggest ally as they drive people to the Rescue Riders Web site and then to volunteer. The Kane County MRC Rescue Riders have been featured in both the *Chicago Tribune* and Chicago's *Daily Herald* newspaper. Within the next year DeMoon and Akey hope to develop a Rescue Riders training program template to be able to share with other organizations looking to start a similar program. When complete, this training guide will be available from the Rescue Riders organization. In the meantime, if your MRC unit would like more information, please visit the Rescue Riders Web site at www.rescueriders.org. ★

Fifth Annual Medical Reserve Corps National Leadership and Training Conference: Forging Powerful Partnerships

The Westin Providence
April 17–20, 2007
Providence, Rhode Island

All MRC communities are invited to send one MRC unit leader to participate in the 4-day network development conference to be held April 17–20, 2007, at The Westin Providence in Providence, Rhode Island. Join national government and non-governmental organizations, emergency response and public health experts, and other community volunteer organizations for this 4-day knowledge-sharing conference. Agenda items will include an array of topics in response to community requests for both the seasoned and newly developed MRC communities. This conference is an ideal meet-and-greet opportunity for local MRC leaders to share best practices and strategies.

Invited Speakers:

RADM Kenneth Moritsugu,
Acting Surgeon General
ADM John O. Agwunobi,
Assistant Secretary for Health
Dr. Rajeev Venkayya,
Special Assistant to the President
on Biological Defense Policy

Plenary Topics:

- MRC Leadership & Sustainability Training
- Forging Powerful Partnerships
- MRC Core Competencies
- MRC Brand Recognition
- Pandemic Flu
- Disaster Behavioral Health

Concurrent Session Presentation Topics:

- Partnerships / Integration
- Volunteer Management
- MRC Resources
- Sustainability
- Operations
- Training
- Media / Communications
- Preparedness Planning
- Special Needs

Other Activities:

- An Evening with the Surgeon General
- Poster Session / Regional Resource Sharing
- Regional Breakout Meetings
- Facilitated Networking / Information-Sharing Sessions (Breakout by focus area)
- See New England

Saying “Thank You”: Volunteer Recognition

MRC Program Office Spotlights

The MRC Program Office spotlights volunteers, units, and organizations that highlight the Program's mission; underscore the importance of volunteerism; and promote collaboration at the local, state, and national levels. New spotlights are added to the Web site each quarter to illustrate the work being performed throughout the nation by MRC units and their partners.

The most recent volunteer and unit spotlights include Mid-America Medical Reserve Corps volunteer Richard Keeney and the Peninsula MRC of Southeastern Virginia. Richard Keeney, a retired railroad machinist, joined the MRC over a year ago with his wife. The pair was motivated to join following the events of Hurricane Katrina. According to MRC coordinator Karen Whitlow, Keeney's commitment as a volunteer has helped to build the Mid-America Medical Reserve Corps, and his willingness to help makes him an asset to the unit. In addition, Mr. Keeney dedicated himself to improving his service to the community by attending classes to become a medical assistant.

The Peninsula MRC, coordinated by Jennifer Freeland, is tremendously involved in the community. The unit recently held a Disaster Volunteer Day in which numerous community stakeholders participated. The Peninsula MRC created a strong training component for its 502 volunteers and offers training sessions at least once a month on subjects such as NIMS (IS-700), as well as disaster, terrorism, and pandemic influenza preparedness and response. ★

For more information or to view archived spotlights, please visit www.medicalreservecorps.gov/Spotlights



“WaterFire,” Barnaby Evans' award winning fire sculpture installation on the three rivers in downtown Providence, Rhode Island

Wet & Wild Winter in Western Washington: The MRC Steps in to Help

November 2006 will go down in history for its wet and wild weather in the state of Washington. During the flooding events that occurred in the second week of November the county activated the Emergency Operations Center at the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) for Snohomish County. The flooding was so severe, it was a Federally Declared Disaster. When an "All Call for Volunteers" went out to MRC & Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members, many responded. Paula Drake, a local EMT, worked long shifts in the call center, responding to citizens requesting aid. Her calm reassurance and ability to work under stress was a tremendous asset to the DEM. Steve Hagberg, a non-medical MRC

member, supported the Operations Information Technology section, providing continuous updated information to the DEM staff. Terry Clark worked in Logistics, sending tons of sand/sandbags and equipment to outlying communities. In this time of need, more than a dozen RN's, Chaplains, EMT's, and other non-medical MRC volunteers came through, providing professionalism and compassion to the communities most effected by the floods. ★



Snohomish Co. MRC Team
(Left to Right): Terry Clark,
Steve Hagberg, & Paula Drake

Wild weather devastated parts of
Snohomish County, Washington

MRC and NACCHO Establish Partnership



In mid-2006, the Office of the Surgeon General's MRC Program Office selected the

National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) for a cooperative agreement to assist and support the MRC Program in its work to support local MRC units. The most exciting part of this relationship is that the majority of the funding NACCHO has received is specifically designated to go to local MRC units around the country to assist in the development and strengthening of these local resources.

NACCHO has four main tasks under this agreement. The first is to coordinate the provision of \$10,000 in capacity-building funding to each eligible MRC unit. More than 515 MRC units applied during this funding cycle. The application review process is currently underway and funds are expected to be distributed to the selected MRC units by April, 2007.

NACCHO's second task is to coordinate and distribute funds to support MRC unit leader participation in the 2007 Annual MRC National Leadership and Training Conference. Each MRC unit is eligible to apply for funding to send one participant to this year's conference. The application for travel stipends is available on the MRC Web site. Completed applications must be returned to NACCHO by March 1, 2007.

The third task under the MRC / NACCHO partnership is to provide assistance for upcoming regional and

national meetings. For instance, NACCHO has participated in planning for the 2007 National Conference and has presented at seven MRC regional meetings. NACCHO staff is currently working on setting up and managing several meetings where MRC will be an important agenda item.

Finally, NACCHO's fourth task for 2006-2007 is to support and promote the national recognition of the MRC program. NACCHO has engaged the expertise of a marketing specialist to help develop a marketing strategy for the units and the MRC Program Office. One component of this strategy includes the creation of this national MRC newsletter. This newsletter will be a pivotal mechanism to raise awareness about the MRC and its critical role in public health.

As the relationship between NACCHO, the MRC Program Office and MRC Units grows, NACCHO is open to and encourages feedback and suggestions as to what work we can do to develop and enhance the capabilities and resources of the local MRC Units. The MRC / NACCHO staff is excited to work closely with the local MRC units to continue to support them in any way possible to strengthen their programmatic work and to support their relationships with partners and supporters around the country. If there are questions, concerns, or suggestions for NACCHO, please contact Jack Herrmann, Project Director at (202) 783-5550, Ext. 281 or at jherrmann@naccho.org. ★



Legislative Update

On December 19, 2006, President Bush signed the **Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act** (P.L. 109-417). This bill establishes an “all-hazards” approach to public health preparedness, rather than focusing exclusively on acts of bioterrorism. In addition, the bill officially authorizes the Medical Reserve Corps.

This new law also codifies much that is already existing or planned practice with respect to the CDC cooperative agreement program which provides funds to state and local health departments to support preparedness. There is a strong emphasis on performance measurement and fiscal accountability and a new requirement for a state match beginning in 2009 (which would

include in-kind contributions). The law also opens the hospital preparedness program (which it moves organizationally from the Health Resources and Services Administration to a new Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response) to direct funding of partnerships that could include a group of hospitals and a state or local health department, rather than passing all the funding through the state.

Many of the implications of this new law will be sorted out in the coming months. The full text of the bill can be found by searching for S.3678 (109th Congress) at <http://thomas.loc.gov>. For a summary of the bill, please visit <http://www.naccho.org/advocacy/documents/SummaryofBTbill.pdf> ★

Staff Profile: Lieutenant Marna Hoard

Lieutenant Marna Hoard serves as a Program Officer in the Office of the Surgeon General Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Program Office. She is responsible for overseeing the coordination of MRC outreach activities, and her duties include developing activities to increase awareness about the program, encouraging establishment of new MRC units, assisting with the provision of talking points and briefing materials for HHS and other officials, and participating in partnership and coordination activities with Federal government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and professional associations.

According to LT Hoard, her role is to “facilitate conversation” between MRC units and potential partners. What she likes best is talking to people to find out what they need and then figuring out how to best link the MRC to the appropriate organization and/or resource. ★

MRC Assists with Mass Vaccination Exercise in Pueblo, Colorado

More than 5,000 people received flu and pneumonia shots and vaccinations in an effort to test the Pueblo City-County Health Department’s ability to vaccinate a large number of people quickly in the event of a flu epidemic.

Approximately 150 MRC volunteers helped run the clinic. The Pueblo Medical Reserve Corps, housed at the Pueblo City-County Health Department, was established recently to aid in community disaster planning and assist with public health events—like the mass vaccination exercise—throughout the year.

Medical Reserve Corps volunteers assisted in many areas of the clinic: physicians pre-screened community volunteers, nurses provided vaccinations, and non-medical volunteers fulfilled many roles throughout the day. These volunteers assisted in areas such as volunteer check-in, the commissary, supplies and inventory, and traffic control.

The mass vaccination exercise was deemed a success by local health officials. Not only did the local health department have an opportunity to test its mass vaccination plan, but a community service was provided to the citizens of Pueblo as well. ★



Over 5,200 residents of Pueblo, CO lined up in the morning to receive flu & pneumonia vaccinations in an effort by local health dept. to test mass vaccination plan



About 150 local MRC volunteers assisted with mass vaccination exercise by working in various sections of the clinic

Advisory Board Vital to MRC Unit's Rapid Growth

The South West Alabama Medical Preparedness MRC unit, serving Baldwin and Mobile counties of Alabama, has found tremendous success in recruiting volunteers. The unit attributes this success to the relationship the unit has with its housing organization, Volunteer Mobile, and its advisory board. The advisory board, which now consists of 20 members, was hand selected and includes representation by such entities as the state health department, emergency management agency, local medical society, hospitals, and universities. This devoted advisory board then recommended individuals to represent local organizations—all of which, upon invitation, eagerly volunteered to participate in regular organizational meetings. The MRC then used tailored faxes to reach potential volunteers at these local organizations. For example, to reach physicians, the MRC has faxed a letter, co-branded with the MRC logo and medical society seal, to physician organizations. Although it can take multiple faxes, the response from physicians receiving the fax has been phenomenal—over 200 have joined. This MRC has found the key to its success is the positive relationships fostered by a strong and involved advisory board, consisting of individuals who are really behind the MRC. ★

★★★★ A Look Ahead ★★★★★

February

27 12:00-1:30 p.m. (Central Time)
**When the System is Overwhelmed:
Protecting the Provider During
Biodisaster**
www.adph.org/alphtn

March

National Multiple Sclerosis Education
& Awareness Month
National Colorectal Cancer
Awareness Month
National Nutrition Month

4-6 **The National Emergency
Management Summit – New
Orleans, LA**
www.emergencymanagementsummit.com

5-11 Multiple Sclerosis Week

6-10 **EMS Today Conference and
Expo 2007 – Baltimore, MD**
www.jems.com/emstoday

16-19 **APhA Annual Meeting and
Exposition – Atlanta**
www.aphameeting.org

17-21 **2007 National Disaster Medical
System (NDMS) Conference,
Nashville, TN**
www.ndms.chepinc.org

22 12:00-1:30 p.m. (Central Time)
**Psychology of Terrorism and
Psychological Counterterrorism: 7
Things You Must Know**
www.adph.org/alphtn

24 World Tuberculosis Day 2007

27 American Diabetes Alert Day

April

National Donate Life Month

7 World Health Day

2-8 National Public Health Week

15-21 2007 National Volunteer Week

17-20 **The 2007 MRC National
Leadership & Training Conference,
Providence, RI**
www.medicalreservecorps.gov

21-28 National Infant Immunization Week

28-29 2007 WalkAmerica
(March of Dimes)

May

American Stroke Month
Lyme Disease Awareness Month
Asthma & Allergy Awareness Month
National High Blood Pressure
Education Month
Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection
Month

13-19 National Women's Health Week



We Want to Hear from You!

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

Submittal Guidelines:

- Please include contact information (email 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. Please send photos as attachments to Email submissions. Photo submissions should also include a caption or description of the event taking place.

Email us at: MRCnewsletter@naccho.org

