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MRC In Touch

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

September 2014

www.medicalreservecorps.gov

Featured Article

Utah County MRC Tests Skills in Point of Dispensing Drill

On May 6, the Utah County MRC participated in a point of dispensing (POD) drill to test distribution of mass prophylactics. Five MRC volunteers worked with Utah County Health Department nursing staff and the emergency response planning team to distribute 458 doses of “medicine” (candy) to “heads of households” (high school students). The event offered a valuable learning opportunity for high school students since they could see the procedures that will be followed in the course of a pandemic or bioterrorism attack. Additionally, MRC and health department personnel received valuable practice to prepare for an actual event.

Overall, the exercise provided a chance for MRC volunteers to learn how they would be incorporated into a POD drill; however, there were a few challenges that leaders identified that can be improved for the future. The area used for the drill was not optimal because the entrance did not allow enough space to form lines and exercise participants faced interference from cross-traffic that was not participating in the event. More signage could have helped to identify what was happening at each point and to direct traffic flow. Additionally, leaders noticed that using uniforms or vests to identify volunteers would have been useful; volunteers wore badges, but they were hard to see from a distance. Nurses recognized that there was not enough time to counsel every recipient and are looking for other ways to educate those receiving prophylaxis.

September is National Preparedness Month! See the article below for tools and resources your MRC unit can use to promote preparedness in your community. Also, email mrcnewsletter@naccho.org with your plans for Preparedness Month and you could be featured in upcoming publications!

MRC/NACCHO Connections

NACCHO's MRC Awards Process Opens September 30!

NACCHO is pleased to announce that the 2014-2015 [NACCHO MRC awards](#) process will open on September 30. This year, NACCHO will again offer two awards: a Capacity Building Award, which will provide funding to eligible MRC units, and the Challenge Award, which will ask units to design a proposal for a project that aligns with community health initiatives. Visit <http://mrcnaccho.org> for more information, including the [Request for Applications document](#) and to preview the [application questions](#). Additionally, the site features last year's Challenge Award winners' blog and [video](#) updates highlighting the progress of their projects. View their updates to get inspiration for projects to submit for this year's Challenge Awards!

Please note for new and prospective units only: By September 17, new MRC units must be registered with the DCVMRC in order to be eligible for this year's award, and prospective MRC units in the process of registering must

have applied for MRC registration in order to be eligible. [See more](#)

Stay tuned to the MRC listserv for more information about this year's awards.

Announcements

MRC Connect Application Launches at the End of September

At the end of September, NACCHO will launch MRC Connect, the new web- and mobile-based application for the MRC! Currently, the mobile version of the application is undergoing approval for Apple's iTunes store and the Google Play store. Once available on Apple and Google, NACCHO will provide details on how to register for and download MRC Connect.

On August 25, NACCHO hosted a demonstration of MRC Connect to show all of the system's features and uses for MRC units. If you missed the webinar or would like to review what was discussed, view the recording [here](#). You will be prompted to register if you did not view the live demonstration. A [transcript](#) of the webinar is also available.

September is National Preparedness Month

September marks the eleventh annual National Preparedness Month, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has designated this year's theme to be "Be Disaster Aware, Take Action to Prepare." The CDC will also promote the importance of preparedness planning for vulnerable populations throughout the month. MRC units play an especially critical role in helping their communities to be prepared for disasters and emergencies. For tools and resources to help promote National Preparedness Month in your community, view the following:

- FEMA's [2014 National Preparedness Month toolkit](#)
- America's PrepareAthon! [event planning materials](#) (Sept. 30)
- CDC's 2014 National Preparedness Month [resources for vulnerable populations](#)
- The American Public Health Association's ["Get Ready Day" event planning materials](#) (Sept. 16)

Also, stay tuned to [NACCHO's Preparedness Brief blog](#) for updates from NACCHO during National Preparedness Month, including weekly updates featuring valuable preparedness tools and resources to reach vulnerable populations and more. Let us know what your MRC unit has planned for National Preparedness Month by emailing mrcnewsletter@naccho.org and your unit could be featured in an upcoming MRC newsletter or on NACCHO's blog!

Introducing "Flu on Call"

Flu on Call™ is a new initiative led by the CDC in conjunction with NACCHO and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials to establish a national network of triage lines to use during a severe pandemic. The goals of Flu on Call™ include improving access to antiviral prescriptions for people who are sick; providing an alternative to face-to-face provider encounters; and reducing surge on medical facilities.

Under the Flu on Call™ system, telephone triage lines would be used to assess the health status of callers, help callers determine the most appropriate site for their care, divert patients from hospital and emergency care settings when they would be inappropriate, provide clinical advice, and, where feasible, provide access to antiviral medications. Flu on Call™ draws on existing call lines and project partners are working closely with the American Association of Poison Control Centers, as well as United Way/2-1-1. Poison control and 2-1-1 centers from across the country have been selected as Flu on Call™ pilot sites and are now testing the system. NACCHO is working with Flu on Call™ partners to identify areas to integrate with MRC units across the country.

[Learn more about Flu on Call™.](#)



The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to be a leader, partner, catalyst, and voice with local health departments.

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Please contact Alyson Jordan, NACCHO's MRC Communications Specialist, with any questions or suggestions for the newsletter at 202-783-5528 or at ajordan@naccho.org.