



## SPECIAL NEEDS PREPAREDNESS OUTREACH

We are excited to share our progress with yet another grant activity. NACCHO awarded our unit \$15,000 to join forces with a neighboring MRC – Greater River Valley, based in Andover – for preparedness efforts across our combined 14 cities and towns. Our two units are teaming youth and adult members for a multi-generational program that especially targets home-bound seniors. The project allows us to leverage economies of scale, while building on lessons learned from earlier initiatives in other communities.

The grant commitment involves working with local senior centers and community agencies to identify those who may be at greatest risk in a disaster. Home-bound elders, and those with disabilities and special health care needs, may find it particularly challenging to cope with power outages and other emergencies. Therefore, teams of trained MRC volunteers will collaborate with police, fire, senior advocates, and other partners to schedule home visits with our most vulnerable residents. Our teams will explain how to shelter-in-place, what to bring to an emergency shelter, and how to reach essential services. Residents will also learn about communication plans, go-bags, and general preparedness concepts.

Our unit has already compiled the first 100 72-hour kits that are specifically intended for vulnerable recipients. The MRC youth members who have signed up to help are eager for coaching in a public health activity that can have tangible and gratifying results. We further hope to extend a sense of social connectedness across generations. By exchanging information, providing disaster materials, and training the next generation of caregivers, we are eager to keep these residents safe!



UMV MRC  
55 Main Street  
Westford, MA 01886



*Civilian Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities*



## UPPER MERRIMACK VALLEY MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

WWW.UMVMRC.ORG

NATIONAL MRC  
15<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ISSUE  
SEPTEMBER 2016

### A MESSAGE FROM YOUR STAFF

How much do we value the availability of life-saving services, even when those services are not being used? Consider volunteer fire departments, which could go for months without responding to a fire, car accident, or medical emergency. Yet the moment disaster occurs, communities still count on their well-trained volunteers to respond effectively.

MRC units are similar. Although we are not first responders, we continue to recruit, train, drill, and prepare for whatever calls us to carry out our mission. Our unit served in at least one deployment a year for its first decade. Causes included a vaccine shortage; Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy; shelter coverage during floods, winter storms, and tornados; screenings after a possible TB exposure; inoculations for H1N1 and seasonal influenza; wellness calls in a heat emergency; and medical service at the Boston Marathon. During years without a disaster response, members supported community events such as flu clinics across the region. Clinics provide a valuable public service, while sharpening our skills to staff an Emergency Dispensing Site.

Our region now faces many serious hazards that could trigger a call-out at any time. New England's worst drought in 14 years is worsening. We're enduring our warmest summer on record. Nearby Concord just had its first tornado. Positive West Nile Virus samples were identified in our area. Communities are rightly concerned about additional threats that include terrorism and the opioid crisis.

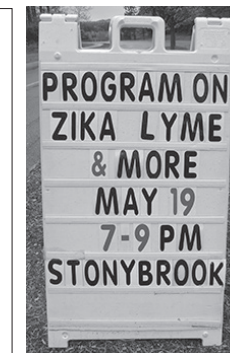
The Health Department continues to monitor these and other public threats and will notify the MRC when needed. Staff members continue to stay proactive by meeting with our counterparts and local, state and federal partners. As illustrated below, we received grants to attend one of ASPR's (Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response) first Medical Countermeasures Summits. In addition, we strive to keep our members' education current by offering pertinent classes on emerging issues. Whenever our response is needed – for medical and non-medical support – we'll reach out to our 560 volunteers. Thank you for helping to protect our region by volunteering for your local MRC!

Sincerely,  
Sandy Collins, RN, Director

Nancy Burns, EMT, Coordinator



**LEFT:** Sandy and Nancy with Gary Kleinman, Region 1 Administrator for Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), at the Medical Countermeasures Summit in Providence, RI.  
**RIGHT:** Members joined a forum to learn about emerging diseases, and regularly attend trainings.



### THE MISSION OF THE UMV MRC

The mission of the Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps is to recruit, train, and deploy members for disaster preparedness in three areas:

- Public health emergencies
- Mass casualty events
- Community service activities

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Director: Sandy Collins, RN  
978-399-2908

[scollins@westfordma.gov](mailto:scollins@westfordma.gov)

Coordinator: Nancy Burns, EMT  
978-399-2549

[nburns@westfordma.gov](mailto:nburns@westfordma.gov)

Address: Westford Health Department  
55 Main Street, Westford, MA 01886

**UMV MRC Web Site:**

[www.umvmrc.org](http://www.umvmrc.org)

**MA MRC Web Site:**

[www.mamedicalreservecorps.org](http://www.mamedicalreservecorps.org)

**National MRC Web Site:**

<https://mrc.hhs.gov>

Communities Served: Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Lowell, Tewksbury, Tyngsboro, and Westford (host agency).

### Contents...

A Message From Your Staff — 1  
Mission Statement/Contacts — 1  
National Notes — 2  
Behavioral Health Grants — 3  
The Year in Pictures — 4 & 5  
Compelling Activities — 6  
American Heart Month Plans — 6  
Calendar of Events — 7  
Special Needs Outreach — 8

## NOTE FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICE



Dear Members of the Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps,

Thank you for continuing to make your community healthier and more resilient! Your service shows your families, friends and neighbors the real difference that volunteers can make with the MRC. Please know that we understand the importance of your local mission, and will do our best to successfully achieve our mission to support you and the MRC network.

In the past year, we have completed our transition from the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR). We work with our ASPR colleagues to ensure the support and growth of the MRC network, as well as amplify the capabilities of units and volunteers. There is a great deal of enthusiasm from our leadership on how the MRC can be utilized as a solution to address local public health and emergency needs. For example, the MRC is currently being viewed as a very valuable resource for the public health response to Zika, because MRC units nationwide have for many years participated in activities that help prepare communities for emerging infectious diseases. We are glad that we are continuing to work with the OSG to connect local MRC units with the Surgeon General's initiatives. In fact, the Surgeon General was a speaker on our August Well Check Webinar, highlighting how MRCs can play a role in helping to combat our nation's opioid epidemic.

I always appreciate hearing about the UMV MRC's activities. Your level of dedication is clear by the many activities you participate in year-round. I enjoyed learning about your continued efforts to combat childhood obesity through *Let's Move!* where you set an event record engaging over 100 children. It was also great how you took the opportunity to participate in a mass casualty incident exercise with your response partners, while supporting two marathon medical stations. No doubt your efforts to test your emergency response and medical triage capabilities during this event, and participation in your regular communications drills, will result in you and your community being better prepared. As a champion of engaging youth in the MRC, I was excited to hear that you connected with your local HOSA-Future Health Professionals chapter, and that members have expressed interest in joining. It was also interesting to learn about your innovative Challenge Award outreach initiative, addressing domestic violence intervention in your community through the national *Cut It Out* program.

I congratulate you on another great year and look forward to seeing what you do in the coming one. The MRC network will celebrate its 15-year anniversary in 2017. We are sure that the MRC will remain a proven resource for improving the health, preparedness, and resilience of communities nationwide. It is because of MRC units – and volunteers like you – that the network continues to be strong. Thank you for playing a role in our continued and future success.

Warmest regards,

CAPT Rob Tosatto  
Director, Medical Reserve Corps



### TRAINING DAY GRATITUDE

We thank Captain Tosatto for making a special Skype appearance at this year's Training Day! Most of our members had never seen our National MRC Director, and were pleased to speak with him directly. Captain Tosatto offered inspiring comments, and was happy to "meet" our volunteers.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS THROUGH 2016

Please contact the Coordinator at 978-399-2549 or [NBurns@WestfordMA.gov](mailto:NBurns@WestfordMA.gov) to sign up for activities of interest. Also check the web site, [www.UMVMRC.org](http://www.UMVMRC.org), for updates.

**I. Community Festivals** — Volunteers at all levels are needed to cover shifts at these events:

**Sat. Sept. 10**, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. — *Dracut Old Home Day*, High School complex, 1580 Lakeview Ave, Dracut.

**Sat. Sept. 17** — **Concurrent events in three communities:**

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. — *Emergency Preparedness Event*, Aubuchon Hardware Store, 1777 Main Street, Tewksbury.

10 a.m. to 3 p.m. — *Lucky Duck Regatta*, Forge Village Pond, Westford; need volunteers for family-friendly event.

11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 2 to 5 p.m. — *Yankee Doodle Homecoming*, Town Hall complex, 365 Boston Road, Billerica.

**Tues. Sept. 20**, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. — *Member Appreciation Dinner*, Chelmsford COA. Invitations being mailed to all members who participated in a UMV MRC activity since August 2015.

**Sat. Sept. 24**, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. — *Apple FallFest* on Chelmsford Town Common. Seeking BP screeners.

**Sun. Sept. 25**, 6:30 p.m. — 3rd Annual *Overdose Candlelight Vigil* on Chelmsford Town Common, registration needed.

**Tues. Sept. 27**, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. — *Farmer's Market*, Preparedness Month display, Westford Town Common.

**Sat. Oct. 1**, 1 to 4 p.m. — *Westford Sportsmen's Club* Open House at 80 West Street, Westford.

**Weds. Oct. 5**, 7 to 9 p.m. — *Light Up The Night* domestic violence awareness program and vigil, Parish Center for the Arts, 10 Lincoln Street, Westford; no registration needed.

**Fri. Oct. 21**, 9 a.m. to noon — *Senior Preparedness Event*, Council on Aging, 20 Pleasant Street, Westford.

**Sat. Oct. 22**, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. — *Tyngsborough Health and Safety Fair* at the High School, 30 Norris Road, Tyngsborough.

**II. Courses** — These events are free and open to members at all levels. Pre-registration is encouraged. The classes offer two CEUs and two OEMS hours for medical attendees.

**New Member Orientation** — If you have not yet attended an orientation, then please come to learn about our unit, and receive your badge and polo shirt. **Tues. Sept. 13**, 6 to 8 p.m., Millennium School, 23 Depot St, Westford

**Medical Impact of Environmental Emergencies** — Amy Lyn Parker, EMT-P, will draw from her years of field experience in recognizing and treating a wide range of injuries caused by the great outdoors. Come to learn about the impact of extreme weather, woodland plants and creatures, and how to stay safe when leaving home for your next adventure. **Weds. Oct. 19**, 7 to 9 p.m., Millennium School, 23 Depot St, Westford.

**Flood Safety Awareness** — Benjamin Selleck, FF/EMT-P of the Bedford NH Fire Dept, is sharing his powerful talk from New Hampshire's annual Emergency Preparedness Conference. Two CEUs and two OEMS hours are expected for medical attendees. **Thurs. Nov. 17**, 7 to 9 p.m., Town Hall Auditorium, 55 Main St, Westford.

**Understanding Alzheimer's** — Mal Allard, CAEd and founder of 'Their Real World,' will present, *Got Confusion?* She'll explain what caregivers need to know about this disease, including how it feels to have memory loss. **Weds. Dec. 7**, 7 to 9 p.m., Town Hall Auditorium, 55 Main St, Westford.

**III. Flu Clinics** — Both medical and non-medical members are needed for each clinic.

#### TEWKSBURY

**Weds. Sept. 28**, 10 a.m. to noon, Tewksbury Senior Center.

**Mon. Oct. 3**, 12:45 p.m. to 4 p.m., senior housing facilities.

#### BILLERICA

**Tues. Oct. 18**, 9 a.m. to noon – Senior Center, 25 Concord Rd.

**Sat. Oct. 29**, 9 a.m. to noon – Town Hall Aud, 365 Boston Rd.

#### CHELMSFORD

**Thurs. Oct. 13**, 2:30 to 7 p.m., Chelmsford Senior Center

**Thurs. Nov. 17**, 3 to 7 p.m., Chelmsford Senior Center

#### WESTFORD

**Thurs. Oct. 20**, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Franco-American Club

**Fri. Oct. 28**, 9 a.m. to noon, JV Fletcher Library

**Fri. Nov. 4**, 9 a.m. to noon, JV Fletcher Library

**Tues. Nov. 8**, 5 to 8 p.m., Millennium School

**Weds. Nov. 16**, 5 to 8 p.m., Millennium School

We will share clinic requests from **Lowell, Dracut, and Tyngsboro** as they become available.

## COMPELLING ACTIVITIES

We are grateful to all of our members who participate in MRC events throughout the year. Here's what our busy unit and its staff members were doing from September 1, 2015 to August 30, 2016.

### Supported 6 Community Fairs

Billerica's Yankee Doodle Homecoming  
Dracut's Old Home Day  
Dracut Health Fair  
Baystate Marathon in Lowell  
Chelmsford's Health Fair  
Westford's Summerfest (2 days)

### Provided American Heart Association Classes

Healthcare Providers CPR/AED (3 classes)  
Heartsaver First Aid  
Heartsaver CPR/AED

### Offered 5 Disaster Training Programs

Psychological First Aid  
ICS for Healthcare Providers  
Diabetics in Disaster  
Hazardous Materials  
Training Day at MCC

### Welcomed Partners and Thanked Volunteers

New Member Orientations (x2)  
Member Appreciation Event  
Chelmsford Cable TV Broadcast  
HOSA (Youth) Presentation  
Chelmsford Volunteer Fair  
Rotary Talks: Chelmsford & Westford

### Monitored State & National Trends

Ongoing MDPH Email Alerts  
Monthly MRC 'Well Check' Calls  
MA MRC Meetings and Task Forces  
ASPR/TRACIE Work Group  
MA Pediatrics Workshop  
Vermont MRC Presentation  
Small Business Networking  
Mass Medical Society Forum  
Medical Countermeasures Conference

### Supported Violence and Suicide Prevention

"Live for Liv" Festival in Westford  
Cut-It-Out Talks (Westford, Tyngsboro, Billerica)  
Active Shooter Drill at Fenway Park  
Cut-It-Out Trainer Education  
Night Out for Safety in Tewksbury  
Suicide Prevention for Trainers

### Responded to Unannounced Drills

MDPH: Quarterly MRC Call-Outs  
MRC New England: Unit Leader Alerts

### Staffed 11 Flu, Pneumonia, and Shingles Clinics

Chelmsford, Westford, Billerica

**American Heart Month Training** – Each February we honor this special month with classes that result in two-year certification from the American Heart Association. The CPR/AED classes teach CPR and use of an AED for adults, children, and infants; and relief of choking. The fee to cover certification cards for all classes is \$10 (at-cost through our training center, payable at the start of each class).

Heartsaver CPR/AED (for non-medical members)

**Day/Date:** Tues. Feb. 7  
**Time:** 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**Location:** Cameron Senior Center  
**Address:** 20 Pleasant Street, Westford



Healthcare Providers CPR/AED (for medical members)

**Day/Date:** Weds. Feb. 8  
**Time:** 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

**Location:** Town Hall Auditorium  
**Address:** 55 Main Street, Westford

First Aid (for all members)

**Day/Date:** Weds. Feb. 15  
**Time:** 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**Location:** Chelmsford PD Training Room  
**Address:** 2 Olde North Road / Rt. 4, Chelmsford

**Snow Date:** In case one of the classes above is snowed out, we will reschedule for **Weds. Feb. 28**, 6 to 9:30 p.m., at a location to be determined.

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH GRANTS** – Our last newsletter celebrated the \$15,000 award we had just received for campaigns against violence. NACCHO – the National Association of County and City Health Officials – empowered us to carry out two initiatives for mental health support and domestic violence prevention. By now we are working with two teams of over 12 members each who are becoming trainers for both programs – double the numbers we had promised for the grants!

### CUT IT OUT PROGRAM

We partnered with the Middlesex District Attorney's Office to organize several events that promote the national *Cut It Out* program. This initiative began as a statewide program in Alabama, going nationwide in 2003, and is currently promoted by the Professional Beauty Association. Because hair stylists are often the first to notice signs of possible domestic violence in their clients, *Cut It Out* focuses on teaching salon personnel how to make referrals safely.

Volunteers from our unit joined local stylists and cosmetology students to attend *Cut it Out* lunchtime seminars at Nashoba Valley Technical High School in Westford, Serenity Salon in Tyngsboro, and Hair Illusions in Billerica. In addition, we either discussed the program with salon owners by phone, or personally delivered information packets and explained the



**Left:** MRC volunteers attended sessions at local salons, as well as a 'Train-the-Trainer' seminar to learn how to present the program themselves. **Right:** MRC volunteers attending the first talk at Nashoba Tech.

program, to 45 salons across all seven UMV communities. Those salons that were unable to send stylists to an event have thus been introduced to the issue and notified about local resources. This initiative is especially timely because October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

In July we held a 'Train The Trainer' event, in which the D.A.'s outreach director explained how our volunteers could continue the program through their own presentations to salons. Because only seven people across MA are currently certified as *Cut it Out* presenters, our entire region could benefit through this expanded cadre of trainers.

### SUICIDE PREVENTION



Jonathan Mattleman contrasted suicide myths with facts, and shared concepts so MRC team members can deliver effective presentations to stakeholder groups for suicide intervention.

We also held a 'Train The Trainer' seminar in August for MRC members who have agreed to help community groups identify those at risk of depression and suicide. We invited mental health consultant Jonathan Mattleman – who is certified in a national program called QPR: Question, Persuade, Refer – to provide the instruction. Mattleman cited several current statistics for the Bay State: There are over 550 completed suicides a year in MA alone. Over 10% of students in a typical suburban high school have seriously thought about suicide, and 13% have self-injured. There are 200,000 crisis calls to the Samaritans each year, with 4,500 hospital stays and 6500 ER visits for self-injury. A key finding: it is not necessary to be a therapist to intervene safely. Anyone can learn basic techniques to recognize warning signs and safely refer the person for help. The ability to listen carefully and rekindle hope are critical qualities. Key themes for our team members included, "Don't be afraid to ask, listen carefully, and remember that caring may save a life."

Our prospective trainers will receive a detailed curriculum and additional materials for providing community outreach through the MRC. Stakeholder groups will include athletic coaches, staff members at schools and senior centers, faith-based leaders, and municipal employees.

# Honoring 15 Years of the MRC!

Community service is a hallmark of our unit. We've provided free screenings for hypertension and cholesterol, and encouraged active lifestyles for those of all ages.



We worked with the D.A.'s office to train volunteers in addressing domestic violence, and a national mental health expert regarding depression and suicide, shown here leading an exercise in his curriculum.



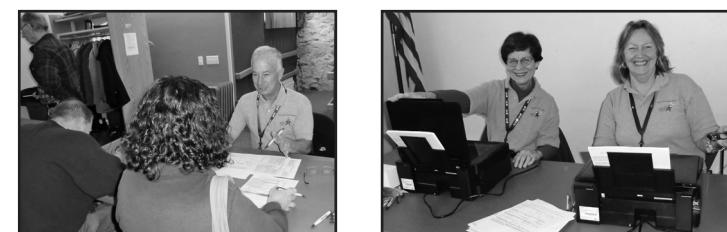
Members maintained their disaster skills through a wide array of training programs.



Your staff and fellow members participated in events with our response partners – as far away as Vermont!



We staffed numerous flu clinics across the region.



Volunteers supported mass casualty exercises that included triage tents at the Baystate Marathon.



Join us as we welcome new members and thank our active volunteers for their service!

