

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

Our youngest members and affiliates played key roles in the unit's activities this year. College students taught modules of a new federal program, supported clinics, and met with senior citizens for emergency preparedness outreach. To assist with their academic programs, we videotaped high school volunteers teaching hands-only CPR, discussing 72-hour kits, explaining disaster concepts, and demonstrating the use of a tourniquet. Local boy scouts loaded our shipment of backpacks with emergency supplies. Youth members also provided services at regional festivals. Thank you, young people!!!



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

FRESH BEGINNINGS!
SEPTEMBER 2017

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR STAFF

You may have seen the commercial for a flooring company that exclaims, "Change is good!" Sometimes the transitions we face may initially cause trepidation. Then we are relieved to discover that a sparkling new beginning is underway, as we continue to build on a firm foundation.

January 2017 ushered in a new leader for both our host agency and the local MRC unit, when Jeffrey Stephens became the director of the Westford Health Department and the UMV MRC. Some of you have worked with Jeff already at the WestFest in May and the Live for Liv event in July. Those who attend our annual Member Appreciation Dinner in September will have another chance to get acquainted with our new director. At the national level, Cdr. Skip Payne recently became the deputy director for the MRC program. We hope you enjoy Cdr. Payne's debut letter to our unit on Page 2.

Of course, we extend our deepest appreciation to Sandy Collins and Rob Tosatto, each of whom began well-deserved retirements this year. Thanks to the solid groundwork that they provided, both our local unit and the national program are still growing and thriving. As you can see from the activities described in this newsletter, 2017 is becoming a banner year at many levels!

We truly believe that 'the children are our future.' Thus we are especially grateful for the dramatic strides being made by our youngest participants. The article on youth involvement reveals how students from middle school through college have embraced the chance to shine across several MRC projects. The photo spread on pages 4 and 5 highlights the work of the many contributors who were active through our unit over the past year. Members from age 14 to those in their 80s, representing all backgrounds and types of service, continue to support our life-saving mission. We couldn't be prouder of every single member!

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Stephens, R.S., Director *Nancy Burns, EMT—Coordinator*



Our new UMV MRC Director, Jeffrey Stephens, welcomed the Coordinator and three volunteers to the MRC exhibit in this year's 'Live for Liv' festival.

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

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UMV MRC Web Site:

www.umvmrc.org

MA MRC Web Site:

www.mamedicalreservecorps.org

National MRC Web Site:

<https://mrc.hhs.gov>

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

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NOTE FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICE



Dear Members of the Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps,

Thank you for volunteering your time and skills to serve your community. Your service to your MRC is a shining example of how volunteers have been making their communities healthier, safer, and more resilient since the MRC began 15 years ago!

This 15th anniversary milestone has allowed us to reflect and celebrate how the MRC has changed over the years. We have grown so much since we started with those first 43 units to now almost 1,000 units nationwide. And all along the way, you – our MRC volunteers – have been essential to highlighting the program's capabilities and local impact by supporting public health initiatives such as *Let's Move!*, emergency responses to winter storms and Hurricane Sandy, and public health responses to H1N1 influenza and Ebola. We are also starting a new chapter with MRC Program Director, CAPT Rob Tosatto, retiring after 13 years of leading the MRC. He has been a friend and mentor to many of us in the MRC and is a great example of what it means to serve. I am happy to step up to the task and work with our partners and colleagues in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response to ensure the continued support and growth of the MRC Network.

This year, we have a number of exciting initiatives in the works. One that I'm particularly excited about is the new *Until Help Arrives* initiative, which we worked alongside Federal partners to launch. As trusted voices in the local community, the MRC is a perfect ambassador to champion this initiative as volunteers are trained and ready to help when needed. I was happy to hear that you have led Massachusetts in this effort by being the first unit to conduct the *Until Help Arrives* training. I am sure that your training will empower members of your community to take action when they are needed. I understand that you also staffed an exhibit at a bike safety event this summer where you promoted *Until Help Arrives*, demonstrated how to apply a tourniquet, screened for hypertension, and shared about other public health initiatives. These activities – as well as the emergency dispensing site training you conducted in May – are just a few of your many initiatives that showcase how you are ensuring that your community is healthy, resilient, and prepared! I am grateful to your leaders for sharing your activities with us and their willingness to share best practices with the MRC Network, such as on our June MRC Well Check webinar.

I commend you on all the great work you have done this year and look forward to continuing to hear about your activities over the next one. We know that the MRC will continue to be a known resource for improving the health, safety, and resilience of communities nationwide. It is because of the support of volunteers like you that the MRC continues to be going strong after 15 years.

Warmest regards,

CDR Skip Payne
Deputy Director, Medical Reserve Corps Program

BOB COHEN MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Your coordinator was recently chosen as one of 13 MRC leaders nationwide to serve as a mentor for new units. This initiative is a joint effort between NACCHO and the MRC Program, in honor of the late Bob Cohen. Mr. Cohen was a beloved and award-winning MRC leader in IL who had amassed over 45 years in disaster response and preparedness through 2014.

Mentors build a one-on-one relationship with MRC leaders who have been in their roles for less than two years. A workshop is scheduled for Sept. 21 and 22 to launch the mentor training. Our own unit will benefit because mentors interact with other professionals in the MRC network, share expertise and knowledge, and gain access to all developed program resources.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Please contact the Coordinator at 978-399-2549 or NBurns@WestfordMA.gov to sign up for activities of interest. Also check the web site, www.UMVMRC.org, for updates.

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

Sat. Sept. 9, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1 to 5 p.m. – **Dracut Old Home Day**. High School Complex, 1580 Lakeview Ave, Dracut.

Sat. Sept. 16, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 2 to 5 p.m. – **Yankee Doodle Homecoming Weekend**. Town Hall complex, 365 Boston Road, Billerica.

Tues. Sept. 19, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. – **Member Appreciation Dinner**. Invitations are enclosed in this newsletter for each member who supported a UVM MRC activity since August 2016.

Sat. Sept. 23, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. – **AppleFest** at Chelmsford Center; need two BP screeners.

Sat. Sept. 30, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. – **Tyngsboro Health Fair**, Elementary School, 205 Westford Rd.

II. Courses – These events are free and open to all members, but please pre-register!

Until Help Arrives – MRC instructors will lead this new federal course, designed to help the general public know what to do during the first few minutes of an emergency, before trained rescuers arrive. See <https://ready.gov/UntilHelpArrives> for details, and learn how to save a life!

Day/Date: Tues. Oct. 17

Time: 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Location: Town Hall Auditorium

Address: 55 Main St, Westford

Lessons from Equine Therapy – There is significant overlap between the clients we care for in disasters and those who benefit from equine therapy. Sign up by 10/15 for a site visit to learn why physicians write prescriptions for 'healing through horses,' and the lessons in patient care that translate directly to our service through the MRC. (2 CEUs / 2 OEMS hours.).

Day/Date: Sunday, October 22

Time: 1 to 3 p.m.

Location: Strongwater Farm

Address: 500 Livingston St, Tewksbury

Motivational Interviewing – Dr. Teo Piqué returns to help volunteers identify behavioral health challenges in disaster settings. She'll explain how Motivational Interviewing can foster effective communication in general, and when this technique can help non-mental health professionals to address the complexities of behavioral health in disasters. (2 CEUs / 2 OEMS hours.).

Day/Date: Thurs. Oct. 26

Time: 6 to 8 p.m.

Location: Police Training Room (by Drum Hill)

Address: 2 Olde North Road / Rt. 4, Chelmsford

III. Seasonal Clinics – The following are the clinics we currently know of where volunteers at all levels will be needed. Check your e-mail this season for additional clinics to be scheduled.

Weds. Sept. 27, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. – Lowell City Hall

Fri. Sept. 29, 10 a.m. to noon – Tewksbury Senior Center

Fri. Sept. 29, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. – Summit Elder Care in Lowell

Mon. Oct. 2, 9:45 a.m. to 2 p.m. – Tewksbury Senior Housing

Weds. Oct. 11, 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. – Franco-American Club in Westford

Thurs. Oct. 12, 2:15 to 7 p.m. – Chelmsford Council on Aging

Weds. Nov. 1, 11 to 12:30 and 2 to 4 p.m. – Chelmsford Town Hall

NEW FEDERAL PROGRAMS

This spring the Upper Merrimack Valley Public Health Coalition invited our unit to submit a proposal for \$3939 to cover activities that would benefit the entire region and be completed by June 30, 2017. Over the course of seven weeks, we carried out an initiative named "Beyond First Aid." Part of the funding allowed us to develop a more robust first aid kit and compile our treatment protocols. Now our volunteers can staff first aid stations at community events more effectively.

The funding also empowered us to provide the first classes in MA for a brand-new federal initiative, "You are the Help... Until Help Arrives." Eleven of our members attended one of the first six classes of Until Help Arrives in the nation, offered by the City of Nashua. Four additional MRC instructors trained separately to participate in the new classes. We are grateful to all 26 members who supported our pilot class on Flag Day. Having tested and fine-tuned our delivery, we held a larger class for the general public and MRC volunteers on June 29.

Our unit especially appreciates the youth contingent that supported this initiative. One high school student invited visitors at a bike rodeo to practice applying a military "CAT" tourniquet. Two others taught a module on emergency preparedness in our pilot class. A college pre-med student learned the entire course and helped us to team teach the first class.

As a related activity, five members became certified to teach the national "Stop the Bleed" program that was released in October 2016. The material expands on Topic 4 from Until Help Arrives about bleeding control, to accommodate the higher skill level of first responders. Our unit is scheduled to train local police officers in "Stop the Bleed" this fall during their in-service seminars. We will continue to offer this module over the coming months.



MISSION-READY TEAMS

Once again our unit was granted an MRC Challenge Award from NACCHO (National Assn. of County and City Health Officials). Of more than 170 applications that were submitted, we were notified in January that our proposal "exhibited an innovative practice and impressed reviewers." This year's award is for the maximum of \$13,000. We named our project "Grooming MRC Leaders for All-Hazards Response," and invite members to become certified as potential leaders of Mission-Ready Teams. The training is open to all members who are interested in the topics, even if they don't want to lead an MRT.

We offered two crucial components this spring, both of which provided continuing education credits.



Chase Hunter, the Medical Countermeasures expert for MA, discussed Emergency Dispensing Sites and the Strategic National Stockpile.



UMV MRC volunteers joined staff from the Lowell Health Dept. and DPH to unload medical and shelter supplies for the region.

The primary goal for our grant is to recruit, train, and certify MRC volunteers who can lead essential functions across a variety of disaster responses. Candidates will represent a variety of backgrounds including administration, behavioral health, medical care, and communications. Many of our members have already attained some of the targeted knowledge, because our unit has provided classes, exercises, and deployments that reinforced best practices since 2004. Furthermore, our volunteers tend to be highly skilled in their chosen fields. This project basically formalizes and expands on the breadth and depth of our current response capabilities.

Stay tuned to learn about future MRT training and certifications through March 2018!



We welcomed Rose Gould for a lively multi-agency seminar on behavioral health interventions during a crisis.



Keeping Calm and Carrying On!

Preparedness Month is a great time to appreciate the fine work that our MRC volunteers have been doing throughout the year!



We introduced Pubic Health Jeopardy among our health fair activities



Communities across the region appreciated our help with inoculation clinics and blood pressure screening.



Our 'mega-class' trained 28 K-2 teachers in Heartsaver CPR.

Our unit and other MRCs were well represented at a CBRNE seminar.



Training for MRC members included CPR, First Aid, and classroom courses that offered continuing education credits.

Collaboration on senior outreach for disaster preparedness is crucial!

