

NACCHO SPED GRANT

Our unit was honored to be among the 80 recipients – of 240 applicants – to be awarded a highly competitive grant from NACCHO: National Assn. of County and City Health Officials. With our \$7500 funds, we agreed to train at least six volunteers as CPR instructors, and provide classes to the staff of special needs preschools across the Upper Merrimack Valley. We purchased feedback manikins and other supplies that are mandated by the American Heart Assn. as of 1/31/19. We're already surpassing our promise to teach 70 preschool staff. Our members are also invited to a seminar on supporting preschoolers with special needs in a disaster. As time and funds permit, we will continue providing grant activities in FY 2019.



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

EVERY VOLUNTEER MATTERS!

MARCH 2019

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR STAFF

Welcome to one of the most remarkable stages in our unit's history! During the same timeframe when the Red Sox won the World Series and the Patriots won their sixth Super Bowl, our volunteers were setting records of their own.

Right after our last newsletter hit your mailboxes, we became the first MRC unit in MA to offer a team for deployment via **EMAC**: Emergency Mgt. Assistance Compact. Florida was reaching out to other states for shelter support during Hurricane Irma, so we made ourselves available. Although our ten-person team was not activated, we collaborated with our affiliates and shared the lessons learned, to prepare for future responses.

Another huge achievement was our success with **Mission-Ready Teams**. Thanks to a grant from NACCHO (Natl. Assn. of County and City Health Officials), we provided training and supplies so our members would be even more capable of serving across a wide range of responses. We also supported several communities with their Emergency Dispensing Site drills. The video that we developed, *EDS 101*, is now available on the NACCHO web site. The photo at the bottom of this page shows 60 of our members with their disaster response kits at the graduation exercise last April. To advance your own skills, we hope you'll sign up for this year's Training Day!

Meet our new MRC Program Director, Esmeralda Pereira, on Page 2 – and be inspired by highlights from other units across the country. The Calendar on Page 3 invites your involvement with fresh opportunities. Look for your fellow members in action across Pages 4 and 5. The story on Pages 6 and 7 reviews an unprecedented 3 disaster responses during 2018. Page 8 is icing on the cake, as we're exceeding the goals in our most competitive grant to date. We're incredibly proud of your willingness to serve your communities!

Sincerely,

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

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).



NOTE FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICE



Dear Members of the Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps,

Let me start by introducing myself. I am Esmeralda Pereira, the new Director of the Medical Reserve Corps Program based in Washington, DC. I became the Acting Director in August 2017 and the permanent leader in July 2018 after our agency, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), finalized an organizational realignment.

Here at the MRC Program, we are working to realize the vision of the new Assistant Secretary, Dr. Robert Kadlec, who started shortly before Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria made landfall. The ASPR is focused on four priorities: providing strong leadership, building a regional disaster health response system, sustaining robust and reliable public health security capabilities, and advancing an innovative medical countermeasures enterprise.

The MRC has a role to play in several of these priorities. For example, in building a regional disaster health response system, the ASPR plans to promote better integration of public and private sector partners to improve preparedness and response. MRC units are an important partner in both preparedness and response, and units such as yours can be a critical part of the new regional disaster health response system.

Thank you for continuing to serve your community during times of need. Your commitment to building public health preparedness and responding during emergencies is a credit to the MRC program. The Upper Merrimack Valley MRC accomplishes so much each year, and since your last newsletter, your MRC unit has been especially active in supporting community preparedness and emergency responses. I thank your volunteers for supporting the *Stop the Bleed* campaign and for attending numerous disaster response and preparedness seminars throughout the year.

We also appreciate that your volunteers responded to several disasters, including the gas explosions in Northern Massachusetts, and served at overnight shelters and warming centers.

As we look ahead, I am confident that the MRC will continue to play an integral role in promoting preparedness and responding to emergencies, thanks to the collective strength of a nationwide network of dedicated local units like yours.

Warmest regards,

Esmeralda Pereira

Director, Medical Reserve Corps Program



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR)

Measles Exposure (Nov. 10 to 13) – When a child tested positive for measles at the Lowell Community Health Center, public health professionals mobilized from across the state. Within a matter of hours, they had to identify and treat hundreds who may have been exposed and in need of testing and inoculation. Our volunteers had recently drilled in Emergency Dispensing Site operations, and filled 36 shifts with 169 hours of service, during three days when the clinic processed concerned visitors. Economic value: \$5147.



Two weeks later, we were ecstatic to receive the following personal email:

*Dear Jeffrey and Nancy,
Thank you so much for the work that you did in response to the recent measles case in Lowell. At DPH we really appreciated your assistance in mobilizing the MRC volunteers on such short notice. A special thanks to all of the volunteers on behalf of the Department of Public Health.*

*Much appreciate our partnership in health,
Monica*

*Monica Bharel, MD, PH, Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street, 2nd Floor
Boston, MA 02108*

CELEBRATE OUR PRODUCTIVE UNIT!

Throughout calendar year 2018, MRC Volunteers staffed 683 shifts across 57 events, donating 2123 hours of service, at a value of \$69,274 in donated time and expertise.

UMV MRC 2018 ACTIVITIES			
CATEGORY	MRC Vols	Hours	Value
Training/Conferences (x12)	311	748	\$26,001.40
Fairs/Festivals (x8)	51	171	\$5,463.44
Deployments/Drills (x5)	109	427	\$13,145.48
AHA CPR/First Aid (x11)	59	235	\$7,464.23
Flu and BP Clinics (x19)	148	525	\$16,691.80
MRC/PH Awareness (x2)	5	17	\$507.56
TOTALS:	683	2123	\$69,274.00

RECORD-SETTING DISASTERS!

Emergencies are rarely expected. Four months after we recruited our first members in 2004, our unit had its first call-out, to provide phone screening and inoculations during a flu vaccine shortage. We have since responded to about one disaster per year, on top of our already bustling activities. Our responses have run the gamut – from hospital backfill during a flood, to shelter and warming center support for blizzards and ice storms – plus numerous crises big and small. But 2018 was a year for the record books... with THREE disasters responses!

Winter Storm Quinn (March 7 to 10) – Intense snowfall, howling winds, arctic temperatures, flooding, and power outages impacted thousands of households across our region. Thirty of our members staffed overnight shelters and warming centers across UMV communities, donating 120 hours of medical and non-medical support, at a value of \$3618.



Incredibly, our exhausted volunteers still kept their commitment to staff a volunteer fair on the last day of the disaster!



Gas Explosions (Sept. 13 to 22) – Several members called in immediately when reports of this disaster hit the news, asking whether our unit would respond. Over 8600 residents were being evacuated as homes in Andover, North Andover, and Lawrence exploded. As soon as professional responders made assessments and set up shelters, we deployed 20 volunteers to provide initial staffing. We collaborated with other MRCs and response partners across numerous settings to provide medical care, administrative and logistics support, and crisis behavioral health counseling. In the first 9 days, our unit deployed 36 volunteers for 169 hours, at a value of \$5147.



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:

Fri. Apr. 5, 8 to 11 a.m. and 11 to 2 p.m. – **Wellness Fair**. Chelmsford High School gymnasium, 200 Richardson Road, N. Chelmsford.

Sat. Apr. 13 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. – **Wellness Fair**. Lodge of Elks, Webb Brook Road, Billerica.

Sun. June 13 (time TBD) – **Bike Rodeo**. Memorial High School, 320 Pleasant Street, Tewksbury.

Sun. July 14, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. – **Live for Liv**. 4H Fairgrounds, South Chelmsford Road, Westford. (Asking volunteers to serve 3 to 4 hour shifts.)

Tues. Aug. 6 (time TBD) – **Night Out for Safety**. Memorial High School, 320 Pleasant Street, Tewksbury.

Sat. Sept. 7, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1 to 5 p.m. – **Dracut Old Home Day**. High School Complex, 1580 Lakeview Ave, Dracut.

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

Until Help Arrives MRC instructors will lead this federal course, designed to help the 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. Mar. 19

Time: 6 to 9 p.m.

Location: Town Hall Auditorium

Address: 55 Main St, Westford

Training Day! – Sat, April 6, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. MCC Bedford Campus at 591 Springs Road. Event is free but registrations are required by March 30. After we receive 75 registrations, the rest will be temporarily wait-listed. See enclosures in mailed copies of this newsletter for details.

Care of Preschoolers with Special Needs – Staff members active in local integrated and special needs preschools will discuss the basics of this population. Learn about the physical, cognitive, medical, and other needs to be addressed – in an ongoing basis, and for extra support in disasters. This class is offered in honor of our NACCHO grant. (2 CEUs and 2 OEMS hours requested.)

Day/Date: Weds. May 8

Time: 7 to 9 p.m.

Location: Millennium School – Conf. Room B

Address: 23 Depot Street, Westford.

MRC Specialty Training – Modules being developed to enhance our response skills.

Day/Date: Thurs. June 6

Time: 6 to 9 p.m.

Location: Millennium School – Conf. Room B

Address: 23 Depot Street, Westford.

III. Affiliates – We're sharing this information as a professional courtesy. If interested, please sign up through the sponsoring agency, *not* the MRC.

EMS Education at LGH – Lowell General Hospital offers free two-hour seminars in its Clark Auditorium, 295 Varnum Ave. in Lowell. Networking and refreshments at 5:30, education 6 to 8 p.m. Primarily for EMTs, though others are welcome. Seminars are scheduled for 3/27, 4/24, 9/25, 10/29, 11/14 and 12/12. Free, valid for 2 OEMS hours. Email Lisa.Gattinella@lowellgeneral.org to sign up.

NH EPC Conference – Now in its 15th year, this event takes place on Tues, **June 4** in Manchester. Registration opens this spring. Contact Courtney Castro at 603-573-3308 or EPCConference@jsi.com.

Expanding Our Progress and Resilience

We smashed our record for *Let's Move!* participation at festivals, while raising awareness of the MRC and public health initiatives.



We groomed Mission-Ready Teams through a NACCHO grant.



Our "Wake-Up Call" from the 2017 Member Appreciation Event aired twice on WCVB/TV-5 across New England!



Innovative programs included *International Disaster Behavioral Health* and *Lessons from Equine Therapy*.



Community health activities included diabetes and hypertension screening, a bike rodeo, and support of Live for Liv events about domestic violence.



We continued to staff clinics, and offered flu and Hep-A inoculations at our first homeless shelter.



We taught CPR and First Aid to members, town employees, and area residents.



Our unit was a regional catalyst for *Stop the Bleed*, training 180 participants in this life-saving skill!



With excess funds offered by the UMV PH Coalition, we held a forum for 130 participants — with youth support — on *Saving Our Teens!*

