

Volunteer Registries

There is a statewide effort to support a national initiative called ESAR-VHP: Emergency System of Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals. When ESAR-VHP is in place across the country, it will be easier to identify categories of volunteers that can help in disasters, without "double-counting" those who are in multiple organizations.

The MA Department of Public Health is chartered with organizing the system for our state, through MSAR: Massachusetts System of Advance Registration. The network of MRCs across the Bay State represent many organizations involved in shaping this system.



UMV MRC
55 Main St.
Westford, MA 01886



Helping to Keep our Communities Safe!



Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps

www.umvmrc.org

New Year's News
January 2006

A Message from Your Staff

Greetings, members! We thank each of you for your contributions to our success over the past year and a half. Ever since we recruited our first 20 members on June 30, 2004, we've been involved in a lot of valuable activities, with no signs of slowing down! By now there are 265 members in our unit, representing a full range of capabilities. See the foldout in the center of this newsletter for a recap of our first year as an MRC. We appreciate – and value – every person involved, for the unique mix of skills they bring to our organization.

At the national level, MRCs continue to expand and thrive. There are now 350 units across the U.S. with nearly 60,000 volunteers. Our unit has been recognized nationally, as you can see from the photo below, taken at the annual MRC conference in April 2005. Surgeon General Carmona and Cdr. Tosatto stopped by our poster presentation to congratulate us for winning an international award for our recruitment video, "Being Prepared Just Makes Sense!"

On your behalf, we are involved in two national task forces: mass casualty response, and a volunteer registry for emergencies. We also participate in statewide MRC meetings and conference calls, while continuing the activities of a regional unit. As you can see from this newsletter, we are proud of our members and celebrate their achievements! Happy New Year from your staff.

Sandy Collins RN, Director Nancy Burns EMT, Coordinator



Cdr. Robert J. Tosatto, Director of the National MRC Program Office; Nancy Burns, UMV MRC Coordinator; Sandy Collins, UMV MRC Director; and Richard H. Carmona, U.S. Surgeon General

The Mission of the UMV MRC

The Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps is continually recruiting and training 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

National MRC Web Site:
www.medicalreservecorps.gov

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

Contents....

Message From Your Staff - 1
 Mission Statement - 1
 Contact Information - 1
 Advisory Council - 2
 Statewide Snapshot - 2
 About Our Members - 2

Recent Activities and Deployments - 3
 First Year in Pictures - 4&5
 Coming Events - 6
 Ways to Help Your Unit - 7
 Volunteer Registries - 8
 UMV MRC Resources - Insert

Advisory Council Representatives

There is one member of the UMV MRC Advisory Council for each of the seven communities in the Upper Merrimack Valley. These members serve as the liaison between our unit and each town's public health preparedness initiatives.

Billerica – Brian Luttrell, EMT-P

Chelmsford – Sue Rosa, RN

Dracut – Ed Nadolny, CCP

Lowell – Lisa Golden, RN

Tewksbury – Tom Churchill

Tyngsboro – Nanci Dowling-Meehan, RN (acting)

Westford – Host Agency

We thank them for their willingness to serve this unit!

Statewide Snapshot

Our unit continues to work with other MRCs across the state and region, to support our common focus and leverage and streamline our efforts.



Jennifer Frenette, EMT-I (left), is the Region I MRC Coordinator for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; representing units in MA, RI, ME, NH, VT, and CT. **Regina Villa**, RN (right)—through Regina Villa Associates—was contracted as the statewide coordinator for the MRCs.



About Our Members

As of this newsletter, the lion's share of our members are nurses (176) at various levels: RN, NP, and LPN. The next largest groups are EMT-Basics and Paramedics (42), physicians (5), dentists (4), ham radio operators (4), and a wide spectrum ranging from mental health professionals to industrial hygienists, business and administrative support, a medical technologist, a pharmacist, and a mortician. *We need all of these volunteer types and more!*

Although we do recruit medical professionals, we also value our *non-medical volunteers*. These members will be needed to handle ancillary tasks during an event. Some members are employed full or part-time, while others are retired or are based in the home. Effective disaster response demands an unlimited variety of skills, which are needed with little or no warning.

Our unit is already well positioned to handle public health emergencies, especially setting up mass prophylaxis clinics. Many members are trained and experienced in this area, as our unit has responded to several of these deployments. Newer members could help in these events through just-in-time training. We are also broadening our expertise in mass-casualty events, and open to community service activities. Again, a wide variety of volunteers are needed.

Do you know someone who could be a valuable asset to the UMV MRC? Please introduce them to our unit!



Ten Things YOU Can Do to Help Your MRC

Through the end of 2005, our focus has been to establish a solid foundation for our unit. We invited the first members to join, offered and evaluated training classes, formed an Advisory Council, refined procedures for operations and background checks, provided the first badges and uniforms, and engaged members in a variety of activities and deployments.

Our next goal is to *double our membership*, while continuing to strengthen our organization. As in David Letterman's Top Ten lists, here are some ways YOU can help.

- 1. Spread the Word!** If every member invited at least one friend to join, or brought them to one of our training events, we could meet our recruitment goals immediately! Please remind prospective members that their involvement can be as little or as much as they'd like. Their willingness to be pre-credentialed and contacted in case of an emergency means we'd have a greater pool of qualified volunteers to draw on in a disaster. In this way, they could save lives in their community.
- 2. Share Information.** If you know of an event occurring in your community in which the MRC could have a presence, let us know!!! (These include health fairs, church events, and school programs.)
- 3. Stay Current.** Check the website, www.umvmrc.org, for occasional updates to the calendar and Latest News items, and enhancements to other sections. Also visit the national web site, www.medicalreservecorps.gov, for the big picture.
- 4. Keep in Touch.** Contact your coordinator by e-mail (nburns@westford.mec.edu), phone (978-399-2549), or letters (Nancy Burns, 55 Main Street, Westford, MA 01886) with ideas for the unit and updates about YOU. Also feel free to call Sandy Collins, Director, at any time. Changes in your availability and training, resources we should know about, and general feedback are always welcome. For example, how do you like our newsletter?
- 5. Consider a Leadership Role.** We're looking for at least two *team leaders* in each of our seven communities, to help with call-outs and assist with local events. We're also interested in volunteers for short-term *task forces*. These groups would have a limited number of meetings, with research in between, to make recommendations on specific areas to the Advisory Council. Please let us know if you're like to take on a more active role.
- 6. Join Our ListServ.** The easiest, cheapest, and fastest way to communicate with members is by e-mail. If you haven't been receiving messages from us, please visit www.umvmrc.org/listserv/ and add your online address. (For those without access to a PC, we'll use postal mail and phone calls as needed.)
- 7. Keep Your Records Updated.** If you have not sent back a CORI form, please ask us to send you one, and return it as soon as you can for our files. Also send copies of certifications — such as classes taken and updated CPR cards — that could be useful for our records.
- 8. Have Your Badge and Uniform Ready.** If you still need these items, please let us know so we can make the necessary arrangements — such as taking your picture for the badge. Then, you can wear these items to trainings and deployments.
- 9. Learn about NIMS, ICS, and BT.** See the web site for online versions of this training, and check the calendar for possible classroom offerings.
- 10. Keep Your Loved Ones Safe.** Learn about personal and family preparedness, to protect those whom you care about in case of emergency. A good source is the Citizen Corps web site: www.citizencorps.gov/ready/.

Coming Events

Our unit has scheduled the following classes for winter, with more to come. Please contact Nancy Burns (nburns@westford.mec.edu or 978-399-2549), or sign up on the web site, to enroll for these FREE sessions. Advance registration is greatly appreciated though not required.

Avian Flu/Pandemics

Dr. Al DeMaria, MDPH
Tues. Jan. 17, 7 to 9 p.m.
Westford Academy Auditorium
30 Patten Road, Westford
2 CEUs and 2 OEMS hours

This session is open to all interested parties; nurses, EMTs, and other medical personnel; police, fire, public health, and municipal employees; and the general public. The speaker is the Chief Medical Officer and Director of the Bureau of Communicable Disease Control for the MDPH, and is nationally recognized for his expertise in infectious diseases.

Introduction to the MRC

UMV MRC Staff
Thurs. Jan. 26, 7 to 9 pm.
Police Department Training Room
918 Main Street, Tewksbury
2 OEMS hours

This session is intended for recruitment in Tewksbury, as well as anyone interested in learning about the unit, and members who would like to meet the staff.

Smallpox Certification

Mary Conant, RN, BSN; MDPH
Weds. Feb. 8, 7 to 9 p.m.
(Snow date Feb. 15, 7 to 9)
Police Department Training Room
2 Olde North Road, Chelmsford
(Near Drum Hill Rotary)
3 CEUs, 2.4 CMEs, 3 OEMS hours

This session, taught by the smallpox coordinator for the MA Dept. of Public Health, results in certification to administer smallpox vaccine.



S.T.A.R.T. Triage

Marianne Bitner, EMT-P
Sat. Feb. 18, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Police Department Training Room
2 Olde North Road, Chelmsford
(Near Drum Hill Rotary)
2.4 CEUs, 3 OEMS hours

This popular session explains the nationally-recognized Simple Triage And Rapid Treatment method for assessing victims at a disaster.

Stress and Crisis Management

Lt. Tom Greenhalgh, CISM
Tues. Mar. 7, 7 to 10 p.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room
365 Boston Road, Billerica
2.4 CEUs, 3 OEMS hours

This session presents concepts of recognizing and dealing with stress in a crisis; as it applies to rescuers, their colleagues, and the public they support. The instructor is the co-director of the Greater Lowell critical incident stress management team.

JUMPSTART

Marianne Bitner, EMT-P
Mon. March 13, 7 to 9 p.m.
Millennium School All-Purpose Room
25R Depot Street, Westford
2 CEUs, 2 OEMS hours

This counterpart to the basic START course explains triage for pediatric victims in an emergency situation.

Recent Activities

Over 100 of our members participated in UMV MRC events during a two-month stretch this fall. There were Hurricane Katrina relief deployments to the gulf and Camp Edwards (Otis), a regional disaster drill, seven flu clinics, a health fair, a CPR/AED refresher, and a slew of classes. Meanwhile, due to the strong interest in forming new MRC units across the state, your staff has continued giving presentations to regional public health organizations.

Deployments

Katrina - When the call went out for help with relief efforts, the national MRC program urged members in units across the country to respond. While our focus is on *local* preparedness, many volunteers wanted to get involved in assisting victims of our country's worst natural disaster.

Everyone recalls the initial confusion as multiple agencies struggled to manage the response of thousands of willing volunteers. The areas affected by disaster were unsafe, and early efforts to provide assistance were not assured of matching the appropriate skill levels with the greatest needs. Our own unit monitored the situation until a process was in place to apply members effectively, without placing them in danger.

Eleven members of our unit filled out applications, while others asked how else they could help. We salute each of these individuals, knowing the sacrifices involved in juggling schedules with their colleagues and waiting on pins-and-needles as their anticipated deployment date approached.

Eventually, four members were deployed to the gulf: Joy Connorton (who returned in October for a second stint), Karen Robinson, Dinah Sue Deck, and Maryellen Ramstack. Each member served for at least two weeks, staffing emergency shelters for displaced residents and supporting field medical units.

Because relief agencies were inundated with a backlog of thousands of requests, they were unable to send many of the volunteers according to the timeframes they had worked so hard to arrange. All members who stepped up to help served our unit admirably, even those whose services were deferred.

Otis - When Camp Edwards on Cape Cod opened its doors to 235 evacuees, MRC units from across the state were eager to provide service. Eleven members of our unit provided care at inoculation clinics, offered administrative support, wrote prescriptions, and served as camp nurses.



UMV MRC members supported an EDS clinic simulation in Lowell.

Regional Drill - Thirty members of our unit, representing a wide range of skill levels, tested MRC responsiveness in a multi-agency disaster drill. A small plane fly-over on Sept. 23 simulated anthrax exposure to hundreds of victims attending an event at LeLacheur field. An Emergency Dispensing Site was set up at the Tsongas Arena the next day, offering prophylaxis to these victims. Members helped with everything from distribution of "cipro" to the processing and counseling of victims.

Look how far we've come in our first year together!



• Recruited over 200 members, in all seven communities, at a full range of skill levels...

• Our first deployment happened in November 2004, where 36 members supported influenza clinics in four UMV communities.



• Members kept their skills sharp by updating their CPR / AED.



...starting with our first 20 members, at a focus group on June 30, 2004...



• The staff has been active at the state level...



First statewide MRC Meeting



Mass. Health Officers Association

...and four information sessions in the Fall.



• Seventy of our members completed a four-module Red Cross Disaster course, certifying them to support emergency shelters.



• Members also participated in classes for mass dispensing clinics and smallpox training.



• Our members became active in community service, teaching breast cancer awareness to high school senior girls...



...volunteering at health fairs...



...and supporting B.P. clinics



We also formed an Advisory Council, with representatives from each town.



National MRC Conference Poster Session

We were invited to represent the MRC program at the NDMS Conference.



To top it all off, our video earned a Dalton Pen International Communications Award!



Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps



UMV MRC Resources

Family Preparedness

Disaster response organizations, from the national MRC program to local agencies, encourage all households to set aside items in case of emergencies — such as snowstorms that can cause power outages, and events that require household members to “shelter in place.”

Here are some measures you can take right now to be safer:

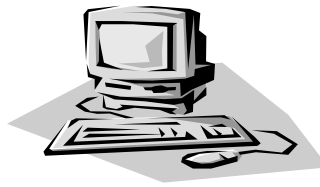
- ⚡ Check the batteries in your smoke alarms, and replace all alarms that are more than 10 years old.
- ⚡ Make sure you know the locations of your local fire department, police station, and hospital. Post a list of emergency contact numbers near all the telephones in your home.
- ⚡ Organize and practice a family fire drill. Make sure your children know what your smoke detector sounds like, and what to do if it goes off when they are sleeping.
- ⚡ Locate the utility mains (gas, electricity, water) for your home, and know how to turn them off manually.
- ⚡ Create an emergency plan for your household, including your pets. Decide where your family will meet if a disaster happens:
 - 1) Close to your home in case of a sudden emergency, such as a fire
 - 2) Outside your neighborhood, in case you can't return home
- ⚡ Ask a friend or relative from out of town to be your "family contact" to relay messages, in case of power failures in your area.
- ⚡ Prepare a three-day disaster supply kit, complete with:
 - Flashlights
 - Batteries
 - Blankets
 - Emergency supply of water
 - Non-perishable food items (and pet food!)
 - Medications
- ⚡ Check the expiration dates of all over-the-counter medications. Discard all that are expired, and replace any that are routinely needed.
- ⚡ Make sure all cleaning products and dangerous objects are out of children's reach.
- ⚡ If you do not already have this type of training, sign up for a first aid course.

For additional information, please contact the Merrimack Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross at 978-372-6871.

Remember:

The first rule of volunteering is to make sure your own family and loved ones are safe!

UMV MRC Resources



Useful Web Sites

Public Health Sites

American Red Cross: www.redcross.org
American Public Health Assn: www.apha.org
Assn. of State & Territorial Health Officials: <http://astho.org>
Health Resources & Services Administration: www.hrsa.org
MRC Natl. Program: www.medicalreservecorps.gov
Natl. Assn. of County & City Health Officials: www.naccho.org

CDC-Related Sites

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov
National Immunization Program: www.cdc.gov/nip
Emergency Preparedness & Response: www.bt.cdc.gov
Public Health Training Network: www.phppo.cdc.gov/phtn/
Traveler's Health: www.cdc.gov/travel/
National Prevention Information Network: www.cdcnpin.org/
Health Topics A-Z: www.cdc.gov/az.do
CDC Publications and Software: www.cdc.gov/publications.htm

Massachusetts Sites

Massachusetts Home Page: www.state.ma.us/
Department of Public Health: www.state.ma.us/dph

Emergency Preparedness and Bioterrorism Sites

www.mass.gov/dph/topics/bioterrorism/bt.htm — MDPH emergency preparedness and response

www.usamriid.army.mil/education/bluebook.htm

This USAMRIID (U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases) link is for the “Blue Book” that provides in-depth clinical information for recognition and treatment of biological agent disease.

www.bphc.org– Boston Public Health Commission