

UMV MRC Provides Services and Resources to Communities

Since last year's newsletter, our unit has enhanced its capabilities as a regional resource, while providing higher levels of service to local residents.

Some of the training courses provided to our members were also open to the public. Members learned about Pandemics and Emergency Preparedness; Bloodborne Pathogens, Personal Protective Equipment, and Scene Safety; New Member Orientations; Behavioral Health and Psychological First Aid; AHA CPR/AED for HealthCare Providers; AHA Heartsaver CPR and First Aid; MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus); Incident Command System for Emergency Dispensing Sites; and Flu Care At Home (Train-The-Trainer for Community Outreach). We were active at state and New England levels through the Mass Medical Society Preparedness Symposium and the Region I MRC Summit, as well as launching a series of UMV 72-Hour Emergency Kit Events.

We provided education and blood pressure screening at 12 health fairs across the region, and made a strong showing in three major parades. Our volunteers also provided most of the staffing at ten regional flu clinics in November 2007. Members responded to a tuberculosis exposure by planting tests and conducting follow-ups.

The UMV MRC also participated in a regional Emergency Dispensing Site multi-agency drill. Most noteworthy, twelve of our members served on Boston Marathon sweep teams this April, in the first statewide partnership between the MRC and the Boston Athletic Association!



UMV MRC
23 Depot St.
Westford, MA 01886

PLEASE OPEN ME NOW!
FIRST-EVER TRAINING DAY AND
72-HR EMERGENCY KIT SIGNUP
DUE 9/5!

Civilian Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities!



UPPER MERRIMACK VALLEY MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

WWW.UMVMRC.ORG

FALL UPDATE
SEPTEMBER 2008

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR STAFF

This year was an exciting time to be in our unit, which has seen tremendous growth, with 538 members on our current roster. Our ongoing recruitment and training efforts are helping to ensure that we will provide adequate response capacity for our communities in times of need.

Throughout the fall, the UMV MRC will continue our focus on member and community preparedness. Activities have been scheduled in September in recognition of National Preparedness Month. As Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff explains, "Experience shows that if Americans take steps ahead of time, they stand a much better chance of coming through an emergency unharmed and recovering more quickly." These steps include assembling an emergency supply kit. See the article on Page 3 about collaboration between our MRC and local health departments, to spearhead a series of 72-hour kit events across the Upper Merrimack Valley.

We'll also be promoting the Flu Care at Home program at flu clinics and through regional outreach, providing information on family and pet preparedness at health fairs, and supporting the U.S. Surgeon General's public health priorities through ongoing activities.

Our unit looks forward to offering our first Training Day, at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, on 9/20. We'll also be assisting our communities by participating in several health fairs and classes, and providing staff at ten annual flu clinics this fall.

The MRC program is growing exponentially in its membership and activities. There are 781 MRCs across the U.S., with over 168,000 members. We are proud to be a part of this ever growing and increasingly recognized national program. See the stories inside for our continued involvement at state and national levels.

We hope to see many of you this season! Best wishes,

Sandy Collins **Director**

Nancy Burns **EMT Coordinator**



Captain Robert Tosatto, Director National MRC Program; Sandy Collins, UMV MRC Director; RADM Stephen Galson, U.S. Surgeon General.

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.mamedicalreservecorp.org

National MRC Web Site:

www.medicalreservecorps.gov

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

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Dear Members of the Upper Merrimack Valley MRC,

On July 23 and 24, the Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps (OCVMRC) hosted its first New Leader Workshop at the Surgeon General's office in Rockville, MD. The OCVMRC was lucky to have the help of Sandy Collins and other MRC Leaders in the development of the curriculum for the workshop and to serve as faculty members. Specifically, Sandy facilitated an excellent session on Community Buy-in and Participation.

Sam Schaffzin, our MRC National Technical Assistance Coordinator, led the recent workshop, and said of Sandy, "She is a seasoned MRC leader who is dedicated to strengthening the MRC network as whole. Over the course of the 2-day workshop, she provided tips to new leaders on building community-based partnerships and on the importance of 'developing a message.' She also helped attendees identify new strategies on recruiting, retaining, and recognizing volunteer members."

I personally wish to thank, and recognize, Sandy for her involvement in the workshop. Without the support of successful units, new ones wouldn't have a model from which to develop and grow. We are constantly working at the national level to provide beneficial resources to MRC units, and it was especially nice to show the UMVMRC as an example to others of what makes the MRC such an amazing and unique program!

Keep up the good work, and thank you for sharing your resources (and leaders) with us.

Kind regards,

CAPT Rob Tosatto
Director, Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps

Two of the special guests who addressed this ground-breaking group were Surgeon General Stephen Galson and Rear Admiral Carol A. Romano, Assistant Surgeon General and Chief Nurse Officer, U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps.



Faculty and participants of new MRC Leader Workshop with Surgeon General Galson. The course will now be rolled out across the country through the National Office.



RADM Admiral Romano, Collins, and CAPT Tosatto



SURGEON GENERAL PRIORITIES

Surgeon General RADM Galson has named four areas of focus in addressing public health concerns:

- Disease Prevention
- Eliminating Health Disparities
- Public Health Preparedness
- Improving Health Literacy

The MRC plays a significant role in helping to address these priorities at the local level.

COMING EVENTS

Please call the Coordinator at **978-399-2549** or send e-mail to Nburns@WestfordMA.gov to sign up for activities of interest. Also check the calendar on our web site for postings.

I. Health Fairs

Medical and non-medical members are needed to staff our MRC display table, and to educate the public on health and preparedness issues. Both of the following events attract huge crowds. The Dracut event will mark our unit's first presence at this 8th annual fair, which drew over 13,000 people last year!

Dracut Old Home Day

Saturday, September 6 (rain date 9/7)
3-hr.shifts: 8:30-11:30, 11:30-2:30, or 2:30-5:30
High School Complex, 1580 Lakeview Avenue

Yankee Doodle Homecoming (Billerica)

Saturday, September 13
Noon to 5 p.m. (11:30-2 or 2-5:30)
Town Hall / High School, 365 Boston Road

II. Training Opportunities

New Member Orientation

Wednesday, September 17, **6:30** to 8 p.m. (note earlier time!)
Abbot Middle School, 25 Depot Street, Westford
Two OEMS credit hours for EMTs

Each member is urged to attend one of these basic training sessions at their first opportunity. This introductory class allows you to meet the staff, and to acquire crucial information about our unit.

Training Day 9/20 – See the enclosure for details about our first-ever, day-long training event in Lowell.

72-Hour Emergency Kit Events – Let us know if you'd like to assist:

9/17 (Abbot School in Westford at 6 p.m.)

9/23 (Town Hall in Tewksbury at 7 p.m.)

10/2 (Town Hall in Billerica at 6 p.m.)

Each event is followed by an overview of the MRC, so members in uniform polo shirts are particularly welcome.

NIMS-700

Wednesday, October 1, 7 to 9 p.m.
Cross Point Towers, PD Training Room, 1st Floor
Tower 3, 900 Chelmsford St., Lowell
This course is for all levels of members, and is offered for those who prefer a classroom format for this FEMA certification course in National Incident Management System. (Online versions of ICS-100 and NIMS-700 are available at <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/crslist.asp>.)

AHA First Aid

Wednesday, October 22, 6 to 10 p.m.
Cross Point Towers (same as NIMS location)
This popular class results in American Heart Association certification for two years. Cost: Discounted \$15 fee to cover card and materials.

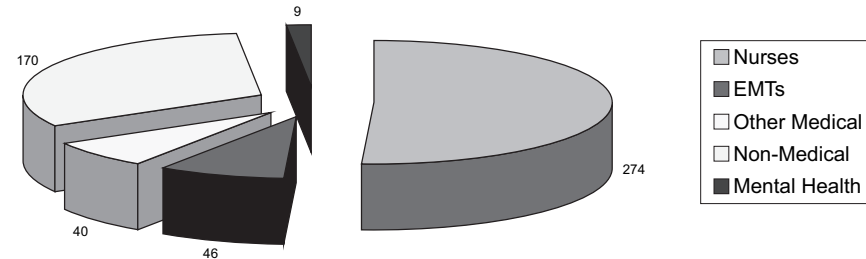
III. Statewide Option

Springfield "Big E" Fair – Units from across MA are needed to staff the MRC booth at the annual "Big E" exposition in Springfield, from **9/9** to **9/28**, in four-hour shifts (10am-2pm, 2-6pm, 6-10pm). If interested, contact Michael Nelson (Hampshire County MRC) directly; at MichaelNelsonMBA@hotmail.com or 413-522-0712. Volunteers receive free entry and free parking.

OUR MEMBERSHIP GROWS!

You may be pleased to know that we have 538 members to date. Our membership includes a wide range of skills. Each of you could provide valuable service during a response.

UMV MRC Member Composition



COMMUNICATION FROM YOU

Some members have apologized to us that, because of their busy lives, they haven't been as active in the unit as they'd want. Be assured that your membership is still important, even if you're less available during a busy stretch. As long as your name is on our roster, you'll be contacted if we need you. And even if you're able to help at only one event per year, that could be the occasion where your personal involvement could make a difference.

Please keep us posted on any changes to your contact information or availability. We are always glad to hear from you, and we appreciate your membership!

DID YOU KNOW?

UMV MRC Coordinator Nancy Burns created a crossword puzzle for MRCs that will be added to the "Toolbox" for MRC units on the national website.

ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATES

Our UMV MRC Advisory Council consists of one representative in each of our seven towns. They serve as liaisons between our unit and our local health departments and communities. We thank them for their time and commitment to our unit.

Billerica – Brian Luttrell, EMT-P

Chelmsford – Sue Rosa, RN

Dracut – Deputy Fire Chief Rich Patterson

Lowell – Christine Connolly, RN

Tewksbury – Ralph McHatton, RPh

Tyngsboro – Diane Ceretti, RN

Westford – Host Agency Staff

LIABILITY LEGISLATION

The UMV MRC Director represented MA MRCs as part of a state working group. The group was charged with drafting language to ensure universal liability protection for MRC units and disaster volunteers who are responding to a pandemic or a large-scale public health emergency, or assisting with public health programs. The working group included representatives from MRCs, the MA Department of Public Health, the MA Hospital Association, the MA Medical Association, and the five state public health organizations. The group submitted consensus language to amend a bill proposed by Senator Moore on pandemic influenza preparedness.

UMV MRC staff – along with the other MRC units, our counterparts in public health, and affiliates and response partners – worked diligently in July to urge support of the amended Bill 2775, entitled "Pandemic and Disaster Preparedness Legislation." This amended version contained the consensus language agreed upon by the working group.

Senator Moore's bill passed in the Senate and was in the process of being reviewed by the House of Representatives. Unfortunately, the bill did not come up for a vote by the House before the close of the formal legislative session which ended in July. We are hopeful that it will be addressed and passed during informal sessions over the coming months. Thanks to all of you who contacted your legislator in support of this pivotal bill!



EXTRA TIME FOR THE UMV MRC?

Take on a leadership role! Join one of our 6 subcommittees. If interested, please call **978-399-2549**.

- Training
- Recruitment and Retention
- Pet Preparedness
- Fund Raising
- Communication
- Special Populations

72-HOUR EMERGENCY KIT EVENTS

In support of national priorities for preparedness, the UMV MRC partnered with regional health departments to kick off a series of 72-hour emergency kit events for local residents.



The Lowell event collaborated with the Lowell Fire Department through a tour of their fire safety trailer.

MRCs are a crucial resource for helping communities to respond in case of all-hazard emergencies – whether man-made, weather related, or involving infectious diseases. The first three days of a disaster are when residents tend to be the most vulnerable. Self-sufficiency is most crucial at the outset, while determining the availability of outside help. Thus the kits are intended to help residents through the first 72 hours.

To help address this top priority issue, area residents are being invited to assemble their own kits with previously purchased supplies, thus ensuring that their family is better prepared. These events allow residents to take advantage of greatly discounted pricing obtained through bulk purchasing, and avoid the hassle of running around to gather needed supplies. Their \$50 pre-payment covers a backpack, emergency disaster guide, crank flashlight and radio, tarp, tent, educational materials, and various first aid and emergency supplies.

Perhaps most important, these events are providing an opportunity for attendees to learn about the larger issue of preparedness. Key topics include the need to set up a family communications plan, considerations involving pets, planning for medication needs, selection of non-perishable foods, issues specific to flu preparedness, and the need to compile information such as crucial documents.

Notices about these events are being included in tax bills, and in local newspaper articles. Additional promotions take place via posters, web sites, radio, and cable TV.

MRC volunteers were on hand to help residents build seventy kits at the April 2008 debut in Westford. Some residents realized that the kits would make great gifts, and purchased extras for family members and friends.



Westford residents built their kits at the April kickoff, assisted by MRC volunteers.

Additional events that were held in Lowell and Chelmsford were also very successful. Each event raised awareness of the UMV MRC, through information sessions that were offered at the end of each kit-building session.



Collins delivered the Chelmsford presentation.

Four more events are scheduled through October 2. To raise awareness, each of the seven UMV communities is placing a sample kit in clear plexiglass containers. These kits are on display in prominent locations across the UMV, such as libraries and town halls, with details about the event and the MRC. Ordering information and guidelines have been provided to MRC units across the county, with tips on running their own events.

MRC members are urged to ensure that their own family is prepared, so they will be better able to help their community in case of a disaster. If you do not have a kit, please sign up for one of our events, or take the responsibility to build a kit on your own. Remember: Being Prepared Just Makes Sense!



Sample kit in plexiglass display with signage.

Thanks for your involvement since our last newsletter!

Our unit launched a series of 72-Hour Emergency Kit Events across the region.



Members filled our debut First Aid class immediately.



We supported a dozen fairs across the UMV.



We taught CPR/AED classes for municipal employees, and for our members.



We walked in major parades, while collaborating with response partners.



Several events drew media coverage, including our medical work at the Boston Marathon.



Our first collaboration with the YMCA, for Healthy Kids Day in Lowell, was family-friendly.



Members provided most of the staffing at flu clinics, run as ICS exercises.



UMV MRC volunteers supported the multi-agency drill in Billerica.



Team leaders met Capt. Tosatto at the Region I MRC Summit in Portland, Maine.



Our first "ICS for EDS" class drew an enthusiastic crowd.



Our first class on Bloodborne Pathogens, PPE and Scene Safety was well received.



The public was invited to talks on MRSA and Pandemic Preparedness.



The staff filled leadership roles at state and national conferences.



We continued to welcome new members and celebrate all our volunteers!



Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps

