



SPOTLIGHT ON SHELTERING



This year, we are primarily focused on preparing members to serve at emergency shelters. We have routinely deployed to emergency shelters since our unit's inception. Members have provided both standby call-outs and actual deployments each year since 2005. The incidents that required our services ranged from floods, fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, ice storms, blizzards, heat emergencies, and power failures. Locally, we made wellness calls, staffed comfort and warming centers, and even filled shifts at overnight shelters across the Upper Merrimack Valley for an entire week. Many of our volunteers consider caring for our most vulnerable citizens during their time of greatest need the most gratifying aspect of their service through the MRC.

A \$15,361.90 FEMA grant enhanced our region's ability to accommodate families with animals. This capability addressed a legitimate public safety issue. During Hurricane Katrina, 40 percent of residents refused to evacuate because there was nowhere to bring their pets!

We have also been awarded over \$11,000 from both competitive and non-competitive grants that will be applied toward emergency sheltering. These funds will help us to develop focused strike teams to provide medical, behavioral health, and administrative services in a disaster. We will kick off our strike team development with a basic MRC Shelter Training seminar on October 15. This is an ideal time for interested candidates to sign up with our unit and develop these valuable, transferrable skills!



UMV MRC
23 Depot Street
Westford, MA 01886



Civilian Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities



**UPPER MERRIMACK VALLEY
MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS**

WWW.UMVMRC.ORG

**TENTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE
OCTOBER 2013**

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR STAFF

Greetings, MRC members and friends! By the time this newsletter goes to print, our unit will have acknowledged its 10th National Preparedness Month. It was a decade ago that the grant was awarded to launch the Upper Merrimack Valley MRC. We concluded September 2013 with an appreciation dinner, to thank our volunteers who participated this past year, for another year of service. This was followed immediately by three major flu clinics in a week, as we kicked off another season in the fight against pneumonia and influenza.

There has never been a better time in our unit's history to celebrate all that our unit has become over the past ten years. National MRC Director Rob Tosatto applauds the fine work of our dedicated members in his moving tribute on page 2. As you can see from our photo spread on pages 4 and 5, the momentum continues.

Take a few moments to absorb what our local MRC has been doing quietly all along to bring positive change across our region. From supporting emergency shelters in disaster, to encouraging public health and preparedness in countless ways, our members set an unparalleled example of good works in action.

At a very practical level, we also provide an incredible return on investment by volunteering our services in times of need. That's why this newsletter includes some 'big picture' perspectives: what your staff is doing to integrate our services across the region, and why we train members in Incident Command for disaster response.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your willingness to serve the public. It is through your sustained efforts over ten years and into the future that area residents can be safer, healthier, and better prepared.

Sincerely,

Sandy Collins, RN, 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

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UMV MRC Web Site:

www.umvmrc.org

MA MRC Web Site:

www.mamedicalreservecorp.org

National MRC Web Site:

www.medicalreservecorp.gov

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

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NOTE FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICE



Dear Upper Merrimack Valley MRC Volunteers,

It is an honor to lead the national network of Medical Reserve Corps units. It is especially sweet to recognize an MRC unit upon their 10th anniversary of service and dedication to their community. Congratulations, Upper Merrimack Valley MRC! As volunteers helping to protect, promote, and advance the health, safety, and resilience of their communities, your work is incredibly inspiring. I commend you and am humbled by your good work.

Knowing your MRC leaders well and getting to hear first-hand about your outstanding initiatives often, I wish to applaud your role as ambassadors of the Office of the Surgeon General. You have made a visible difference in defense of the public's health – whether through flu clinics and disease prevention, family preparedness education, disaster response, or physical fitness support. You truly are a beacon of hope for America. You are key partners for the Surgeon General in emphasizing the critical vision of the National Prevention Strategy: "Working together to improve the health and quality of life for individuals, families, and communities by moving the nation from a focus on sickness and disease to one based on prevention and wellness." The promotion of wellness, prevention and health equity is making a lasting impact on the nation.

Additionally, you have helped to expand awareness of national-level initiatives, such as Let's Move! and Million Hearts. Your engagement builds momentum and impresses upon communities and individuals the importance of good nutrition and physical activity. Because of your efforts, those in the Upper Merrimack Valley area are thinking about their hearts and moving their bodies. Just think of the impact you have as you improve the health of your families, colleagues, and neighbors.

Thank you again for your bold and noble commitment to health, and for your dedication to your community. When considering the constraints and cut-backs the Federal government and our country are facing, it is amazing to see the power and strength of volunteerism march on within the Medical Reserve Corps. Our mission remains the same, and our support of your local efforts only grows. On behalf of the Acting Surgeon General, RADM Boris Lushniak, and myself, thank you for staying the course and congratulations on 10 years of outstanding achievements. Together, we will continue to make a lasting and positive impact on our nation's health, safety, and resilience. I look forward to seeing what the next decade will bring!

Kind regards,

CAPT Rob Tosatto
Director, Division of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps
Office of the US Surgeon General

DID YOU KNOW...?

Your staff gathered photos from their counterparts across the U.S. to create a special MRC 10th anniversary slide show. Original music selections were provided by Zac Cataldo and Black Cloud Productions. Dr. Mitchell Shuldman of UMass Lowell compiled the photos, music, and captions for the final piece. The six-minute video was displayed on the first day of the annual Integrated Summit in 2012. You can see the video on YouTube from this link: <http://umvmrc.org/latestnews/UMV-MRC-on-TV.htm>



Hundreds of attendees watched the slide show offered by the UMV MRC at last year's national Summit.

COMING 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. Note that these courses are free of charge to members, though pre-registration is strongly encouraged.

MRC Shelter Overview – This initial training module explains what MRC members in Massachusetts – both medical and non-medical – should know in staffing an emergency shelter. Topics include different types of shelters, individual considerations before deploying, shelter roles and responsibilities, client interactions in a shelter, and general guidelines for responses across our region and beyond. This course is the first 'building block' in training specialized response teams for deployments.

Day/Date: Tuesday, October 15
Time: 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Location: Town Hall
Address: 55 Main Street, Westford, MA 01886

Training Day – This is our unit's signature event! All levels of members are encouraged to participate. Continuing education credits (CEUs and OEMS hours) are available for attendees with medical certifications. See the insert for the registration form and course descriptions.

Day/Date: Saturday, November 2
Time: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Location: Middlesex Community College
Address: 591 Springs Road, Bedford, MA 01730

New Member Orientation – We ask all our members to complete an orientation to learn about basic operations of our unit. This is the time to meet the staff, ask questions, and receive your UMV MRC badge and polo shirt for identification as a member.

Day/Date: Tuesday, December 4
Time: 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Location: Town Hall
Address: 55 Main Street, Westford MA 01886

Drop-In Day – Informal opportunity for members to stop by and ask questions, review materials, update badges and member contact data, and bring prospective candidates to meet the staff.

Day/Date: Tuesday, December 17
Time: 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Location: Millennium School Offices
Address: 23 Depot Street, Westford MA 01886

AHA Classes – Two-year American Heart Association certification. *Sign up early*; maximum class size is 20. Certification cards are \$10 (at-cost from training center). Optional workbooks can be purchased at the class for \$13, courses themselves are free.

Healthcare Professional CPR/AED (medical)

Day/Date: Tuesday, February 4
Time: 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Location: Town Hall
Address: 55 Main Street, Westford MA 01886

Heartsaver CPR/AED (non-medical)

Day/Date: Tuesday, February 25
Time: 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Location: Chelmsford Senior Center
Address: 75 Groton Road (Rt. 40), North Chelmsford

STAFF ACTIVITIES

The entire network of MRCs becomes stronger through the active participation of its leaders. Your Director and Coordinator take this aspect of their roles seriously. We share best practices with our counterparts, and bring promising new ideas from other units into our region. UMV MRC staff members also work hard throughout the year to keep our unit connected to key organizations and initiatives, to maximize our impact at the local level.



One such activity is our interaction with councils on aging to raise awareness of family preparedness. Talks delivered by the staff to two groups of seniors leveraged an existing presentation that was originally created by one of our own volunteers. Attendees also learned about 72-hour kits, which UMV residents can purchase at a significantly reduced discount from their local health department, or create themselves using checklists. Our unit hopes to expand this effort over the coming year by training our members as presenters.



Staff members attended workshops from NERAC (Northeast Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council) to keep up with the latest technology for disaster response. The Director sits on the state MRC advisory board and worked on developing curriculum for shelter response. She and the Coordinator also participated in Train-the-Trainer workshops to help train others in shelter response.



Greater Lowell Technical High School asked us to provide a workshop for their C.N.A. (Certified Nursing Assistant) students to care for vulnerable patients at emergency shelters. It was gratifying to deliver an overview with slides from actual responses by MRC volunteers. The presentation was followed by a workshop that gave CNA students hands-on practice with the skills.



Perhaps we will see some of these students helping through the MRC after graduation!

We look forward to a productive and fulfilling year ahead and thank you for all you do for our unit and the communities that we service.

INCIDENT COMMAND AND THE BOSTON MARATHON

The writer of this article was one of the first 20 members to join our unit in 2004. She has volunteered for the 'Medical Sweep Teams' at the Boston Marathon annually for six years.



My stepson is a US Marine Corps Captain. I am a nurse who volunteers with the Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps. We unexpectedly share the experience of roadside bombs, he in Afghanistan and I in Boston. My experiences on April 15th of this year really brought home for me the usefulness of a prepared citizenry and the critical importance of Incident Command Systems.

Having volunteered with the Boston Athletic Association (BAA) for the last six years at the Boston Marathon, I have come to appreciate the efficiency and life-saving preparation that goes into this event. It has impressed me each year that hundreds of people prepare – over and over again – for what may be considered a mass evacuation; moving about 26,000 people 26.2 miles in a matter of hours, while also preparing for a mass-casualty event.

Typically, when we serve on medical teams at the Marathon each year, we are looking to treat ailments related to long-distance running. We consider the potential for hundreds of cases of *hyperthermia* or *hypothermia*, of dehydration or hyponatremia, of exercise-associated collapse or cardiac arrest, for strains and sprains and blisters. We are not expecting explosions, maimings, and death. It was exactly because the BAA, the City of Boston, its emergency services, and the hospitals prepare through an Incident Command System for the expected ailments that the events of this last marathon did not result in more deaths.

The MRC provides the opportunity for each of its members to become familiar with the concepts of Incident Command Systems. In a nutshell, you learn that there are chains of command. You are assigned a role for an incident: either planned responsibilities such as the “normal” running of the Boston Marathon, or unplanned factors such as a natural disaster, flooding, ice storm, or tornadoes. Your job is to fulfill your role until you are relieved or reassigned. This coordination of efforts ensures that people don't get in each other's way, and that each job gets done.

On April 15th I was a zone captain for Medical Sweep Team 3. My job was to coordinate a team of 15 other volunteers in the block on Boylston St. from Dartmouth St. to Clarendon St. Our job was to continuously assess the hundreds of runners filling the street for signs of distress for the 4 to 6 hours it takes for all runners to complete the race. I heard the explosions. I saw the smoke. And we had a street full of exhausted people who could now be in danger. It was our job to keep doing what we had been doing all day – to assess runners and keep them moving – but this time moving them away from an unknown situation to safety. So that was what we did, with a lot more urgency.

Care providers in the medical tent – ICU nurses, ED physicians, EMTs whose jobs were to treat the more serious needs of runners – did just that. In about 30 minutes, all of the critically injured were on their way to the trauma centers of Boston. Because people did what they were trained and charged to do, the Incident Command System worked to create order in the midst of chaos and lives were saved.

Please take advantage of the MRC training opportunities to learn about and become certified in ICS. You never know when this knowledge will allow you to significantly impact the life of someone else.

Diana Walker-Moyer, APRN
UMVMRC



Diana Walker-Moyer explains the value of ICS for medical response during the April 15 Boston Marathon bombing, at the 2013 UMV MRC Member Appreciation Dinner.

Celebrate our progress since the last newsletter!

We kicked off the season by holding our Training Day at a new venue, hosted by Middlesex Community College in Bedford, MA.



As always, both medical and non-medical volunteers supported flu clinics across the region.



We promoted fire and bike safety, taught First Aid, and supported the first aid stations at two regional events.



We invited response partners from hospitals and fire departments to join us for self-defense training.



Members made themselves available for numerous call-outs. Some deployed to warming centers and overnight shelters.



Recruitment is ongoing — at community fairs and throughout our activities, as well as during New Member Orientations.



A FEMA grant empowered us to promote pet preparedness through a mailing, seminars, and drills.



We're proud of encouraging healthy nutrition and physical fitness for all generations through the *Let's Move!* campaign.



Volunteers promoted early detection of heart disease by screening for hypertension, sharing the Million Hearts initiative, and providing CPR/AED classes. Stay healthy!

