

Dear MRC Leaders, Volunteers, and Colleagues,

One of the strongest threads woven into the fabric of American culture is that of volunteer service. When someone is in need, we ask what can be done to help. This is never more evident than during a time of disaster. As we recognize September as National Preparedness Month, and today, the anniversary of 9/11/01, as the National Day of Service and Remembrance, it is important to note that being involved in *preparing* your community for disaster puts you in the best position to help during a disaster as well as insure your county, city, or town is able to quickly recover and regain its footing.

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) was founded in response to the attacks of September 11th and the Anthrax attacks that followed. Now celebrating our 10th anniversary, there are close to 1,000 MRC units across the United States and its territories with more than 204,000 volunteers. This national network of community-based groups of volunteers has shown its commitment to improving the health and safety of all communities through the action of volunteers from medical and public health professions, as well as that of other community members dedicated to strengthening local public health systems, improving response capabilities, and building community resilience. We must take this time to recognize and build on our success to make an even greater difference over the coming decade.

With a mission to engage volunteers to strengthen public health, emergency response and community resilience, you provide ways to utilize dedicated volunteers in support of community health needs. As a true community asset, you are able to assess the needs of the community and provide the resources to best support and fulfill gaps in service – in on-going public health initiatives and during times of disaster and urgent need. MRC volunteers assist their communities throughout the continuum of the disaster cycle, from mitigation and preparedness through response and recovery.

As you work closely with government agencies, non-government organizations, and private companies to develop units prior to disaster and integrate units in local response plans you are aware of all the players, and solidify the role of MRC volunteers ahead of a crisis. With this, you position the MRC in a way to respond quickly and effectively to assist your community in rebounding from disaster. Through on-going public health work of the unit, MRC volunteers are creating and promoting healthier life choices and assisting in preventing disease; because the healthier a community is before disaster, the better able they are to withstand that disaster.

For the federal government fiscal year of 2012, the DCVMRC set a goal to see at least 10,000 MRC activities reported by unit leaders within their on-line profiles. As of September 6, there were already more than 10,400! With this month being National Preparedness Month, we have no doubt we will only continue to surpass our projected goal far beyond our imaginations! The many activities you host and initiatives you promote are clearly making a positive impact on the health, safety, preparedness, and response at the community level. Therefore, you are creating a resilient nation, and for that, we are immensely proud.

Regards,
Rob

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Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities