

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Office of Preparedness and Response

Maryland Responds  
Medical Reserve Corps

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# Strategic Action Plan

2015 – 2017

Approved by the Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps Advisory Council on  
January 14, 2015.



This document was prepared by the Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps (MDRMRC) State Program and Advisory Council which are administered by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Preparedness and Response.

Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps  
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Office of Preparedness and Response  
300 W. Preston Street, Suite 202  
Baltimore, MD 21201

Email | [MDResponds.dhnh@maryland.gov](mailto:MDResponds.dhnh@maryland.gov)

Registry | <http://mdresponds.dhnh.maryland.gov>

Website | <http://mdr.dhnh.maryland.gov>

Facebook | <https://www.facebook.com/MDResponds>

LinkedIn | <http://bit.ly/LinkedInMDResponds>

Twitter | <https://twitter.com/MarylandOPR>

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# INTRODUCTION

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## Purpose

- The Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps (MDRMRC) Strategic Action Plan presents the direction of the MDRMRC Network for the years 2015 – 2017.
- The plan aligns MDRMRC with the mission of the Office of Preparedness and Response (OP&R) as well as broader Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) plans and priorities.
- To accomplish our collective mission and achieve our vision, we initiated this strategic action planning process to identify opportunities to improve effectiveness, interoperability and integration.
- Flexibility is built into the plan with the understanding that we will need to respond to departmental requests and directives, as well as to emerging issues that affect the state.
- This plan is a living document that will be reviewed continually by MDRMRC Network staff and members. We will review actual performance against our strategic objectives, and make adjustments to our actions and initiatives as necessary.

## Audience

- This strategic plan is designed for MDRMRC Network members, focusing on issues that we can directly affect and control. Directing the implementation of the strategic plan toward those issues will ultimately lead to improvement in the overall MDRMRC Network.
- Identification of our members and stakeholders allows us to focus efforts on appropriate individuals and groups.
  - Members are primary beneficiaries of services we provide, as they give us our purpose.
  - Stakeholders are organizations interested in the MDRMRC as a whole and who partner with the MDRMRC to carry out its mission.

### MDRMRC Members

- Registered Volunteers
- Prospective Volunteers
- Unit Administrators (state program, county units, response units)
- DHMH, OP&R and Local Health Department Leaders

### MDRMRC Stakeholders

- Community Members
- County and State Public Health Officials and Agencies
- County and State Emergency Management Officials and Agencies
- Federal Government Organizations (i.e., Department of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps, Department of Homeland Security)
- Non-governmental, Faith-based, Civic, and Nonprofit Organizations (primarily in the fields of Public Health, Medicine, and Emergency Preparedness/Response)
- Professional Associations and Academic Institutions

## BACKGROUND

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### National Medical Reserve Corps

Established in 2002, the National Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) program is administered by the Division of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps and sponsored by the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness & Response. The MRC is a national network of local units of volunteers committed to improving the health, safety and resiliency of their communities. MRC units identify, screen, train and organize the volunteers, and utilize them to support routine public health activities and augment preparedness and response efforts. MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals who want to donate their time and expertise to prepare for and respond to emergencies and promote healthy living throughout the year. MRC volunteers supplement existing emergency and public health resources.

### Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps

The MDRMRC has evolved over the years. DHMH established the Maryland Health Care Professional Volunteer Corps in 2004. In 2006, OP&R was formed and assumed management of the volunteer corps, renaming it the Maryland Professional Volunteer Corps (MPVC). In 2009, OP&R launched the State Emergency System for Advanced Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) and incorporated the existing MPVC volunteer base into the system—the result was MDResponds. In 2013, the MDRMRC transitioned to a coordinated state and county volunteer management model with the launch of the “Local MDRMRC Unit Initiative,” in which local health departments (LHDs) were invited to utilize the State ESAR-VHP, the *MDResponds* Volunteer Registry, for local volunteer management. The purpose of this initiative was to provide local jurisdictions with a mechanism for notifying, engaging, and managing MDRMRC Volunteers in their county. In 2014, the MDRMRC State Program established the MDRMRC Network to better coordinate statewide efforts to support MDRMRC Units in the state.

Throughout this document you will find information on activities conducted by the MDRMRC State Program, such as statewide recruitment and training activities. Statewide volunteer activities are designed to supplement and support MDRMRC Units and are in no way intended to replace or diminish the need for a MDRMRC Unit Administrator. Unit Administrators have specialized resources and local knowledge to effectively manage a community MRC Unit. The MDRMRC State Program aims to assist MDRMRC Unit Administrators by providing them with technical assistance and resources to help them meet local volunteer management priorities.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION

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### Vision

- Strong and collaborative network of MDRMRC Units in every county in Maryland that consist of dedicated volunteers who build resilient communities and reduce disaster risks for a prepared Maryland.

### Mission

- Establish a statewide volunteer network of medical and public health professionals which is integrated into established community emergency systems to facilitate a coordinated approach to volunteer management.

### Strategic Priorities

- MDRMRC unit development and support
- Operational guidance for emergency response and public health activities
- Management of the State ESAR-VHP
- Deployment requirements and eligibility
- Credentialing and screening
- State-level training and exercise support
- State-level recruitment and retention activities
- Coordination and sustainment of the MDRMRC Network
- Federal- and State-level partnerships

### Overarching Goal

- Enhance Maryland’s emergency preparedness and response capabilities by augmenting county- and state-level public health and medical services with a source of pre-identified, credentialed and trained volunteers.

### Values

- Community Service: We honor the community-based nature of the MDRMRC and recognize its spirit of volunteerism.
- Action: We seek opportunities to develop meaningful initiatives that support community medical and public health volunteerism and service.
- Resourcefulness: We maximize our potential to learn and leverage relationships and assets to the fullest extent.
- Teamwork: We embrace collaboration and work collectively to achieve our mission.

### Essence Statement

- Ready for Anything

## OPERATIONAL GOALS AND SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES

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### Goal 1: Develop and Support MDRMRC Units and Unit Administrators

- **Objective 1.1. Align state and county volunteer management plans and activities to support the jurisdictional public health agency's response to incidents of public health significance.**
  - Update and publish the MDRMRC Volunteer Management Guide annually.
  - Provide Unit Administrators with guidance on utilizing volunteers including examples of emergency response and public health activities MDRMRC volunteers may be activated for as well as examples and best practices shared from other jurisdictions.
  - Provide Unit Administrators with guidance for developing their MDRMRC Unit Volunteer Management Plan.
  - Conduct reviews of MDRMRC Unit Volunteer Management Plans and provide technical assistance, as needed.
  - Coordinate with health care emergency planners and health care coalitions to determine when and why volunteers would be used to supplement staff at health care organizations and develop guidance for their effective use.
    - Identify volunteer liability issues and scope of practice issues that may deter volunteer use by health care organizations.
    - Develop volunteer management guidelines to facilitate the use of volunteers to support specific health care roles.
- **Objective 1.2. Develop deployment specific policies and protocols for statewide activations that can be used as a template by MDRMRC Units and tailored local needs.**
  - Develop protocol to coordinate with partner agencies for medical readiness screening of potential public health responders at the time of an incident to detect symptoms that may affect medical readiness.
  - Develop written plans for demobilizing volunteers including a protocol for conducting exit screening during out-processing. Incorporate volunteer demobilization and exit screening protocols into the MDRMRC Volunteer Management Guide.
  - Develop written plan for monitoring responder safety and health actions including protocols for 700-800 MHz radio communication capability for deployed volunteers in state shelters.
- **Objective 1.3. Establish and develop MDRMRC Response Units to prepare volunteers of a similar professional background to fill a specific response function.**
  - Finalize plans and protocols for the Medical Examiner Dental Identification Team (MEDIT) MDRMRC Response Unit consisting of forensic odontologists for victim identification during a mass fatality incident.
    - Train Office of the Chief Medical Examiner representative to become a Unit Administrator.

- Assist MEDIT Unit Administrator in developing a volunteer management plan for MDRMRC MEDIT.
  - Finalize plans and protocols for the Animal Emergency Response Corps (AERC) MDRMRC Responds Unit consisting of veterinary and other animal care workers to assist in responding to emergencies involving animals.
    - Train Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) representative to become a Unit Administrator.
    - Assist AERC Unit Administrator in developing a volunteer management plan for the MDRMRC AERC Team.
  - Develop additional Response Units, such as a Radiation Response Unit, Disaster Spiritual Provider Unit, Social Media Unit and a Ham Radio Operator Unit.
- **Objective 1.4. Serve as a subject matter expert and enable information sharing.**
    - Administer and enhance the MDRMRC Network website and social media platforms.
    - Publish quarterly volunteer newsletter and encourage MDRMRC Units to submit content for inclusion in the newsletter.
    - Seek support from MDRMRC Advisory Council to explore practical strategies to common challenges.
    - Support multiple avenues for direct contact with and between MDRMRC Unit Administrators.

## Goal 2: Administer and Maintain the *MDResponds* Volunteer Registry (ESAR-VHP)

- **Objective 2.1. Enhance the *MDResponds* Volunteer Registry to broaden its capabilities for managing deployments and tracking volunteers, to better meet the needs of the MDRMRC Network.**
  - Add a Schedule Manager Module to *MDResponds* which will allow for scheduling and management of multiple deployment shifts through mission manager.
    - Collaborate with Unit Administrators to develop a protocol and training for utilizing the schedule manager module during deployments.
  - Add a Background Check Module to *MDResponds* to provide a method for conducting a complete criminal background check for every type of volunteer registered in the system.
    - Collaborate with Unit Administrators to develop policy and protocol for conducting background checks through *MDResponds*.
  - Update training module and reporting capabilities to better meet the needs of MDRMRC.
  - Add the ability to verify information on accreditation and privileges in hospitals or other medical facilities.
- **Objective 2.2. Provide Volunteers and Unit Administrators with training and technical assistance for utilizing *MDResponds*.**
  - Develop a standardized training that is tailored to the needs of MDRMRC Unit Administrators and volunteers.
  - Train volunteers and Unit Administrators to use *MDResponds* through missions, meetings,

- o trainings and exercises posted within the registry.
- o Keep volunteers and Unit Administrators up to date and engaged with *MDResponds* by conducting quarterly "mini" exercises and sending a monthly email publication to highlight new features added to *MDResponds* and to showcase best practices.
- **Objective 2.3. Exceed federal Emergency System for Advanced Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) program requirements.**
  - o Develop protocol for assigning ESAR-VHP Credential Levels.
  - o Assign all qualified volunteers to one of four credential levels.

### Goal 3: Supplement Local Training and Exercise Plans

- **Objective 3.1. Supplement county efforts by providing technical support and statewide volunteer training and exercise opportunities.**
  - o Assist MDRMRC Units in developing a training and exercise plan to prepare volunteers to support the unit's mission and purpose.
  - o Administrator in-person training for required courses annually (at minimum), in multiple locations around the state.
    - Collaboration from Unit Administrators on local training needs to determine trainings offered by the MDRMRC state program.
  - o Work with state licensing boards and professional organizations to become an approved CME/CEU provider for MDRMRC required training courses.
  - o Verify and approve training records for MDRMRC State Program-sponsored trainings.
  - o Conduct evaluations following MDRMRC State Program-sponsored trainings.
  - o Identify information on relevant training opportunities for volunteers and maintain a list of additional training resources on the MDRMRC Network website.
- **Objective 3.2. Facilitate the inclusion of risk-specific physical safety, mental/behavioral health and personal protective equipment topics into public health responder trainings.**
  - o Identify risks associated with each volunteer role, responsibility, or exposure in each incident.
  - o Find sources that provide updated information on exposures and risks before, during, and after an incident.
  - o Work with subject matter experts to develop a responder safety and health training course to include training for protective actions and for response to exposure or injury.
  - o Conduct at minimum two responder safety and health trainings annually.
- **Objective 3.3. Administer and maintain the MDRMRC Network's Online Training Platform.**
  - o Provide volunteers with access to online training courses that are intended to prepare them for state and local deployments.
  - o Encourage MDRMRC Units to upload unit-specific training courses to this site.

- **Objective 3.4. Increase the number of deployable MDRMRC Volunteers by 25% annually.**
  - Work with professional boards to manage and conduct credential verifications.
  - Send Deployment Eligibility Checklist reminders to volunteers.
  - Develop and implement a deployment eligibility marketing plan that encourages volunteers to complete tasks on the checklist
  - Assist volunteers in maintaining their volunteer profile and completing the minimum required training courses.
  - Collect and record liability and confidentiality agreements.
  - Issue MDRMRC identification (ID) badges and uniforms.

#### Goal 4: Supplement Local Recruitment and Retention Efforts

- **Objective 4.1. Supplement local recruitment efforts by providing technical support and participating in local recruitment events, when available.**
  - Assist MDRMRC Units to develop volunteer recruitment plans to recruit volunteers whose training, license, credential or background support and foster the unit's mission and purpose.
  - Provide tailorable recruitment materials to all MDRMRC Units.
  - Statewide recruitment will focus on recruiting volunteers through state-level organizations (e.g., professional licensing boards, professional organizations, other state agencies, and large private organizations with regional or statewide memberships).
  - Attend professional conferences and meetings to recruit MDRMRC Volunteers and to increase awareness of the program.
  - Place advertisements in professional publications to recruit volunteers.
- **Objective 4.2. Engage volunteers through ongoing public health initiatives and activities.**
  - Host an annual MDRMRC Network Conference and Appreciation Event.
  - Facilitate and utilize feedback from MDRMRC Advisory Council.
  - Engage communities using newsletter and social media outlets.
  - Participate annually in National Prepareathon.
  - Identify relevant training and exercise opportunities and solicit volunteer participation.
  - Bolster retention strategies such as volunteer appreciation events.
- **Objective 4.3. Update and publish the MDRMRC Volunteer Handbook annually.**
  - Conduct volunteer needs assessment to identify types and number of volunteers needed.
  - Develop volunteer functional roles, responsibilities, job descriptions, job action sheets, just-in-time training and safety instructions.

#### Goal 5: Increase the Representation and Sustainability of the MDRMRC Network

- **Objective 5.1. Develop and grow the newly formed MDRMRC Advisory Council consisting of key**

**stakeholders, response partners, and representatives from our volunteer base.**

- Advisory Council will collaborate with MDRMRC Leadership to build community resilience, increase opportunities for volunteer recruitment, identify resources for training and exercise opportunities, implement strategies for volunteer engagement, implement the MDRMRC Strategic Action Plan.
- **Objective 5.2. Foster community resiliency by participating in state and local outreach events.**
  - Develop and test public information materials intended for the general public by improving accessibility (readability, dissemination) of emergency preparedness information.
  - Distribute materials to all MDRMRC Units and stakeholders.
  - Attend county- and state-level preparedness and health fairs.
- **Objective 5.3. Increase the MDRMRC Network representation, collaboration, visibility and influence at the County, Regional, State and National levels.**
  - Foster strategic relationships and monitoring outcomes.
  - Utilize multiple mechanisms (e.g., contracts, cooperative agreements, MOUs) to establish formal relationships.
  - Identify and participate on committees and groups important to growth of MDRMRC Network.
  - Increase county, regional, state, and national MRC points of contact to align preparedness, planning and response efforts.
  - Provide input into policy decisions that impact expansion of the MDRMRC Network.
- **Objective 5.4. Demonstrate a credible and valuable MDRMRC Network.**
  - Encourage MDRMRC Units to register with the National MRC Network.
  - Encouraging MDRMRC Units to measure and report on their value and impact.
  - Conducting gap analyses and targeting areas for action.
  - Encouraging recognition of the efforts and successes of MDRMRC Units and Volunteers.

# PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

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Performance measurement is needed to identify areas for improvement and to determine how best to allocate resources. Additionally, performance measurement demonstrates the value of the MDRMRC Network to our members and stakeholders. The MDRMRC has five key indicators that measure the success of the program.

## **Level of engagement of MDRMRC Unit Administrators (see Goal 1)**

- Percentage of MDRMRC Units with Volunteer Management Plans that are aligned with the MDRMRC State Program Guidance:

2015	2016	2017
##%	##%	##%

- Total number of trained Unit Administrators in *MDResponds*:

2015	2016	2017
##%	##%	##%

## **Sustainment of the *MDResponds* Volunteer Registry (see Goal 2)**

- Total number of missions and notifications in *MDResponds*:

2015	2016	2017
##%	##%	##%

- Percentage of medical professionals registered in *MDResponds* with a primary Emergency Credential Level of three (3) or higher:

2015	2016	2017
##%	##%	##%

## **Level of engagement of MDRMRC Volunteers (see Goal 3)**

- Annual percentage increase of deployable MDRMRC Volunteers:

2015	2016	2017
##%	##%	##%

## **Number of registered MDRMRC Volunteers (see Goal 4)**

- Annual percentage increase of new MDRMRC Volunteers:

2015	2016	2017
##%	##%	##%

## **Level of sustainability of the MDRMRC Network (see Goal 5)**

- Annual increase in collaborative partnerships:

2015	2016	2017
##%	##%	##%

- Annual funding allocated to support state and local MDRMRC Units:

2015	2016	2017
##%	##%	##%