



# The Pulse

SUMMER 2014

Official Newsletter of the MD Responds Medical Reserve Corps

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

New Developments 1

Highlights from the Field 2

A Look Ahead 4

Resources 6

You Count! 6

The MD Responds MRC newsletter is brought to you by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Preparedness and Response.



## Secretary Sharfstein Authorizes Advisory Council

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) Secretary Joshua Sharfstein, MD, signed a memo authorizing the creation of a Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps (MD Responds MRC) Advisory Council.

This project has been a long time coming to give MD Responds MRC volunteers and other stakeholders the opportunity to provide strategic direction to the MD Responds MRC program. A letter of invitation to apply for the Advisory Council will be sent to all volunteers shortly.

## Call Center — Exercising Public Health Plans

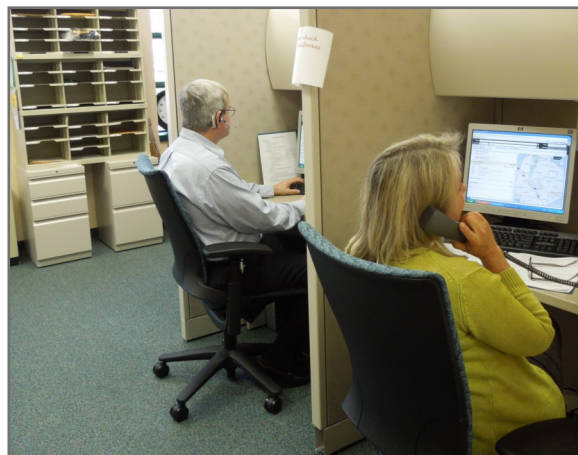
*Contributed by Barbara Rosvold, Public Health Emergency Planner, MD Responds MRC Frederick County Unit Administrator*

On April 10, 2014, MD Responds MRC volunteers assisted in a public health call center exercise with the Frederick County Health Department (FCHD).

Ensuring timely, accurate information is key to any successful response in a public health emergency and an important responsibility of the Health Department. One way to provide that information is through a Public Health Call Center.

The FCHD exercised their plans for activating such a call center with the assistance of volunteers. After receiving “Just-in-Time” training, volunteers acted as call takers in the center. FCHD staff acted as the public and called in with questions and concerns. In 1.5 hours, volunteers helped take over 100 exercise calls.

As a result, the FCHD successfully tested their tracking software, set-up, equipment, and “Just-In-Time” training operations. Lessons learned will be incorporated into their Public Health Call Center plans.



Helen Dickison and Michael Kepler answer public health questions at a call center exercise.

We at the MD Responds MRC Frederick County unit would like to express our appreciation to the volunteers who helped.

As always, we hope that there will not be a need to set up a call center for a public health emergency anytime soon. But, should the need arise, we feel we can confidently execute call center plans. Thank you volunteers for your participation!

## Maryland Emerging Infectious Disease Surveillance

*Contributed by Zachary Faigen, Biosurveillance Epidemiologist, MD Responds MRC Howard County unit volunteer*

DHMH routinely conducts disease surveillance to monitor the spread of disease and minimize the burden of illness in the community. DHMH is closely monitoring these emerging infectious diseases.

### Chikungunya

Chikungunya virus is transmitted by mosquitoes. Symptoms include fever, joint pains, headache, muscle pains, and rash. Health care providers should be on the alert for possible cases in patients who have recently been to the Caribbean. There have been 8 travel-associated cases of chikungunya in the state in 2014 (<http://bit.ly/CDCChik>).

Dr. Katherine Feldman,

State Public Health Veterinarian at DHMH:

“Maryland residents returning from a visit in the Caribbean who experience fever should seek medical care and make their provider aware of their recent travel.”

### Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)

MERS is a viral respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus. Symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

(<http://bit.ly/CDCMERS>)

There have been no confirmed cases of MERS in Maryland. In June 2014, DHMH Secretary Joshua M. Sharfstein signed a directive and order for health care providers and

local health departments to report suspected cases of MERS and follow infection prevention measures to prevent person-to-person spread.

### Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever

Ebola hemorrhagic fever is a severe, often fatal disease in humans and primates. It is transmitted through direct contact with the blood or secretions of an infected person. No Ebola cases have been reported in the U.S. and the likelihood of this outbreak spreading outside of West Africa is very low. For updates on the outbreak in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, visit: <http://bit.ly/CDCEbola>.



Help pioneer our LinkedIn group!  
<http://bit.ly/MDRlinkedin>

## Podcast, Functional Needs in Emergencies



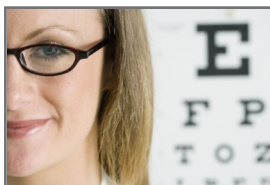
Local Health Departments are well positioned to support the access and functional needs of communities and connect them to resources. In a recent podcast, Chas Eby and Karla Black, Emergency Planners from Maryland and Michigan, respectively, discuss best practices for developing preparedness plans that involve people living with disabilities: <http://bit.ly/1qKQMrE>.

## Help with Hearing and Vision Screenings

*Contributed by Giselle Bonilla, MPH, CHEP, MD Responds MRC Howard County Unit Administrator*

Thank you MD Responds MRC Howard County unit volunteers for participating in the Howard County Health Department (HCHD) School Vision & Hearing program.

With your assistance the Health Department successfully performed 13,272 vision screenings and 13,258 hearing screenings during the 2013/2014 school year. That's an accomplish-



ment! Without your support, we would have never been able to do this. The service you provided is greatly appreciated.

For the 2014-2015 school year, the HCHD will work with the Howard County School System again to provide more screenings to children at school. The health department will need the assistance of qualified MRC volunteers during the screenings.

A request for MRC volunteers' assistance will be sent via email as soon as the dates are available.

## Volunteers Bring Acting Chops to Airport Disaster Victim Exercise

*Contributed by Shawn Stoner, Public Health Emergency Planner, MD Responds MRC Washington County Unit Administrator*

Thank you to the MD Responds MRC volunteers from around the state that participated as disaster victims in the May 2014 Hagerstown Regional Airport Tri-annual Exercise conducted by the Washington County Division of Emergency Services/Emergency Management, and several partner agencies.

This was a full-scale exercise in which volunteers were moulaged, or made up, to replicate injured disaster victims and were encouraged to "act" their part.

Kudos to the volunteers; they broke out their acting chops in fine fashion!

This was also the first time the Washington County unit activated and coordi-

nated MD Responds MRC volunteers. As with any "first" there were some learning curves to maneuver and we did so with the help of volunteers and MD Responds MRC state program staff, primarily Dorothy Sheu.

All in all, this was a great hands-on learning experience for the Washington County Unit Administrators.

On behalf of Washington County, thank you volunteers for your participation in this exercise.



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## Personal Preparedness - Think Inside the Box

*Contributed by Giselle Bonilla, MPH, CHEP, MD Responds MRC Howard County Unit Administrator*

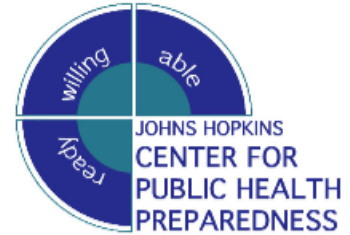
On September 25, 2014, the Howard County Health Department will be hosting a "Think Inside the Box" workshop provided by the Johns Hopkins Center for Public Health Preparedness.

This is an interactive workshop where participants will gain practical information on the importance of personal and family preparedness. This session will enhance awareness and skills in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a variety of public health emergencies that may occur in the region.

Game-based and hands-on activities aid participants in the process of creating an emergency preparedness kit and family

communication plan. Participants will even have the opportunity to access resources and supplies to build their own kits.

The workshop will be held at the Howard County Health Department, 8930 Stanford Boulevard, Columbia, MD 21045, on Thursday, September 25, 2014, from 8:00 am to noon. For more information and to register, visit: <http://bit.ly/1zwwj3Ti>



## What motivates people to volunteer?

Understanding why people volunteer is a crucial focus of the MD Responds MRC.

In Spring 2014, MD Responds MRC volunteers told us about their motivations for volunteering through a survey linked in the Spring 2014 newsletter. This pilot survey helped develop a more in depth inquiry about volunteer engagement.

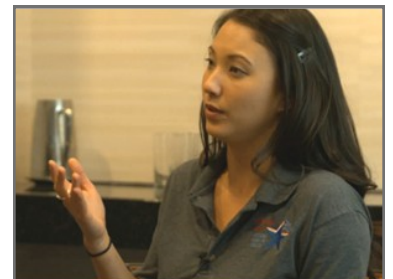
Expect an invitation to this in depth survey soon!

Over the course of 2014, we have been working

with the Maryland Institute College of Art on a project that applies art, design, and health communication strategies to the development of a public information and volunteer recruitment campaign. Understanding what engages volunteers is the first step in this process.

This endeavor is supported by the "MRC Challenge Award," which we were awarded by the National Association of County and City Health Officials and the U.S. Department of Health

and Human Services' Office of the Surgeon General.



Learn more about the 2014 Challenge Award from the MD Responds MRC state coordinator, Stephanie Parsons, in this video: <http://bit.ly/WN1DUM>.



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## Star Spangled Spectacular

The 200 year celebration of the Star Spangled Banner will take place in and around Baltimore September 10-16, 2014. The event will bring an estimated 2.5 million visitors to the greater Baltimore area with the largest public events taking place September 11-14.

The celebration also will coincide with a nationally televised Ravens game against the Steelers on the evening of September 11, as well as five Orioles games including three against the Yankees, from September 12-16.

Representatives from the state, Baltimore City, and other agencies will be operating out of a Baltimore Area Command Center from September 8-16, with full activation the 11<sup>th</sup>-

14<sup>th</sup>. The State Emergency Operations Center will also be activated throughout the period.

MD Responds volunteers will staff two major medical stations at the event to provide first aid and pre-hospital medical care. An activation notification was sent to volunteer physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and registered nurses.

Thank you to everyone who responded!



MD Responds MRC State Coordinator, Stephanie Parsons, packs "go kits" to prepare for future deployments

If you have not yet responded but are interested in helping, email:

[mdresponds.dhmf@maryland.gov](mailto:mdresponds.dhmf@maryland.gov)

Event public details can be found at:

<http://www.starspangled200.com/star-spangled-spectacular>

## Mass Prophylaxis Preparedness and Planning

*Contributed by Giselle Bonilla, MPH, CHEP, MD Responds MRC Howard County unit administrator*

The Howard County Health Department will be hosting a Bioterrorism: Mass Prophylaxis Preparedness and Planning training provided by the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX), National Emergency Response and Rescue Training Center.

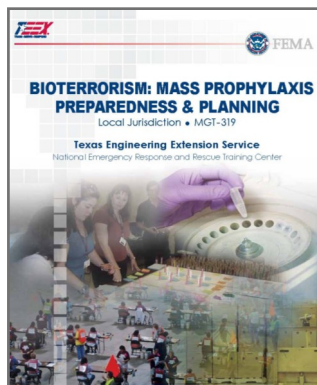
This training is a guide for local health officials and their partners in

the local public health system to coordinate plans to provide mass distribution of medical countermeasures for the jurisdiction as they relate to the Division of Strategic National Stockpile (DSNS) Program.

The course will be held in the Howard County Health Department, 8930 Stanford Boulevard, Columbia, MD 21045, on Wednesday, August 13, and Thursday, August 14, 2014, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

More details: <http://bit.ly/1odR4iY>

Register here: <http://bit.ly/1pqJFRt>



# MD Responds MRC Orientation

The 2014 MD Responds Orientation is right around the corner. We will hold in-class orientations around the state. This interactive training will explain the role of MD Responds MRC volunteers in the state's public health system, equip volunteers to meet deployment eligibility, and walk volunteers through deployment procedures.

Watch your emails for the training announcement! Until then, we encourage both new and seasoned volunteers to take the online training. See details below.

## Deployment Eligibility

Use this checklist to ensure you are ready to deploy.



**1. Have you completed the training requirements?** <http://bit.ly/MDRtrex>

- MD Responds MRC Orientation (online or in class) <http://bit.ly/OnlineMDR>
- IS 100 Introduction to ICS <http://bit.ly/IS-100>
- IS 700 NIMS, An Introduction <http://bit.ly/IS-700>
- Updated training record (with certificates!) <http://bit.ly/MDRupdtr>

**2. Have you submitted required forms?** <http://bit.ly/MDRsignforms>

- Liability form signed and submitted <http://bit.ly/MDRLiabi>
- Confidentiality form signed and submitted <http://bit.ly/MDRconfi>

**3. Do you have your ID Badge?**

- Completed 100% of your profile.
- If applicable, updated professional license number and expiration date
- Email a recent head shot and mailing address where you can receive certified mail: [Mdresponds.dhmh@maryland.gov](mailto:Mdresponds.dhmh@maryland.gov)

## YOU COUNT! Volunteers by top professions, as of July 31, 2014

**TOTAL  
3262!**

Nurses (RN, NPs, LPNs, APNs, aides, Public Health)	<b>1227</b>	Mental Health (therapists, counselors, psychologists, behavioral)	<b>87</b>
Physicians & Assistants	<b>363</b>	EMT (Basic & Paramedic)	<b>76</b>
Pharmacists, Techs, & Aides	<b>226</b>	Veterinarians & Vet Techs	<b>46</b>
Social Workers	<b>133</b>	Teachers & Education	<b>43</b>
Government	<b>78</b>	Dentists, Hygienists, Assists.	<b>40</b>
Other (e.g., law enforcement, morticians, occupational therapy, etc.)			<b>943</b>

### Feedback

What can we do better?  
Do you have any suggestions?  
E-mail us:  
[MDResponds.dhmh@Maryland.gov](mailto:MDResponds.dhmh@Maryland.gov)