

THE CORPS

Official Newsletter for the Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps

Remembering Dr. Al Romanosky

Maryland Responds is deeply saddened by the passing of Dr. Al Romanosky, who served as the Medical Director and State Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for the Maryland Department of Health for over 22 years. A champion of public health and emergency preparedness, Dr. Romanosky was a devoted supporter of the Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps. He played a vital role in numerous deployments, including the COVID-19 response, shelter operations, and repatriation efforts. Beyond his technical expertise, Dr. Romanosky was a passionate advocate for volunteerism—mentoring, educating, and empowering MRC members across the state. His legacy of service, leadership, and compassion will continue to guide and inspire the Maryland Responds community for years to come.



Severe Weather Season

Spring brings more than just sunshine and pollen—it also marks the peak of Severe Weather Season, which spans March through May. This is the time of year when conditions are just right for powerful storms to develop quickly, often with little warning.

While all thunderstorms can produce dangerous lightning, lightning alone does not indicate a severe storm. In fact, some of the most severe thunderstorms—those capable of producing damaging winds, large hail, and even tornadoes—may have little to no lightning at all. That's why it is critical to stay alert and informed.

One of the most important things you can do to stay safe is to understand the difference between a Severe Weather Watch and a Severe Weather Warning:

A Watch means conditions are favorable for severe weather—stay alert and be prepared to act.

A Warning means severe weather is happening or about to happen—take action immediately to protect yourself and those around you.

Knowing the difference can make all the difference in an emergency. Do not wait until the skies darken—take time now to review your emergency plan, identify safe shelter areas, and make sure your emergency alerts are enabled on your devices.

Check out the graphic below for a quick and easy explanation every Marylander can understand!



Maryland at the 2025 Preparedness Summit



From April 29 to May 2, more than 2,400 public health professionals gathered in San Antonio, Texas, for the 2025 Preparedness Summit. The conference theme, “Pathways to Recovery in the Aftermath of Disasters,” emphasized the critical—yet often overlooked—recovery phase of the disaster life cycle.

Maryland was well represented, with many of our dedicated MRC unit administrators in attendance. Pictured above are Alexis Atanda (Baltimore City), Kathy Lowe, Connie Dellospedale (Carroll County), Kelly Payne (Anne Arundel County), Kathleen Long (Baltimore County), and Todd Johnson (Frederick County). Also in attendance were Christopher Osment (Somerset County), Richard Taylor (Talbot County), Denise Hill (Cecil County), and Jon Safron (Prince George's County), who are not pictured. In addition to the MRC administrators, several of Maryland's Public Health Emergency Planners were present, including Thomas Franklin (Howard County), Nicole Brown (Prince George's County), Allison Koehler (Frederick County), and Deb Curro and Debbie Saylor (Anne Arundel County).

We were also honored to have leadership from the Maryland Department of Health's Office of Preparedness and Response in attendance—Director Sara Barra and Deputy Director Mark Arsenault—demonstrating the state's strong commitment to advancing emergency preparedness and recovery efforts. Together, we are helping Maryland stay better prepared and more resilient in responding to public health emergencies.

Prince George's Logistical Support

As part of a recent MRC deployment, a request was issued for volunteer support at the Prince George's County Health Department's all-staff meeting, held at the historic Publick Playhouse in Hyattsville. The event brought together over 450 health department employees, requiring logistical coordination to ensure a smooth experience for all attendees. Rising to the occasion, six enthusiastic and highly capable MRC volunteers assisted with parking and traffic flow. Their professionalism, positive energy, and seamless teamwork significantly contributed to the success of the event. We are deeply grateful for their commitment and proud to highlight their efforts as a shining example of the strength and impact of Maryland Responds volunteers.



UMB Point of Dispensing Drill



On March 12, the Emergency Preparedness Task Force (EPTF) conducted a successful Point of Dispensing (POD) drill at the University of Maryland Baltimore School of Pharmacy. The exercise simulated a mock anthrax exposure, requiring the rapid distribution of doxycycline or ciprofloxacin. Over 100 participants—including EPTF volunteers, Maryland Responds staff, UM faculty, student pharmacists, and Baltimore City Health Department staff—worked together to run three dispensing cycles. Students rotated through roles at registration, triage, counseling, and dispensing stations, managing patient scenarios with varying challenges. The drill processed 848 sign-ins, dispensed 1,068 medications, and simulated services for 188 households. The event averaged a throughput of 547 people per hour. The drill strengthened interagency coordination, enhanced student readiness, and increased awareness of POD operations in public health emergencies.

Photos Courtesy of Arnold Honkofsky

Anne Arundel Mass Casualty Full Scale Exercise

The U.S. Navy, in collaboration with local hospitals Anne Arundel Medical Center, and Baltimore Washington Medical Center, hosted their annual communitywide full-scale exercise to test emergency response capabilities during a simulated mass casualty incident. The Anne Arundel County Medical Reserve Corps Unit supported the exercise by providing volunteers to serve as role players portraying injured victims. Volunteers were triaged on-site and transported via ambulance buses to participating hospitals, helping evaluate and enhance hospital surge capacity and coordination.



Medical Inventory Assistance Deployment



Over the past few months, Maryland Responds MRC volunteers have generously dedicated their time to help inventory emergency medical supplies and resources at the Office of Preparedness and Response warehouse in Hanover, Maryland.

These efforts are ongoing, and MRC volunteers continue to play a vital role in maintaining operational continuity through accurate inventory identification and documentation. Accountability is essential during this process, and your support directly contributes to the success of our preparedness mission.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all the volunteers who have assisted us so far — your hard work and commitment have made a significant impact. We couldn't have done it without you!

Unit Administrator Spotlight



Alexis Atanda has served as the Unit Administrator for the Baltimore City Maryland Responds unit since May 2024, having relocated from South Florida to take on the role. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Medical Sciences with a minor in Emergency Management and a Master of Public Health degree. Alexis brings valuable experience in emergency response through her background as a former American Red Cross member and her work as a COVID-19 contact tracer from 2020 to 2021. Since stepping into her current position, Alexis has played an active role in coordinating community outreach events, particularly those focused on diabetes prevention and awareness. She has been committed to increasing volunteer engagement, encouraging volunteers to complete their profiles, and creating opportunities for participation. To enhance the volunteer experience, she developed a feedback form to ensure volunteers feel heard and valued during events. She continues to work toward building stronger volunteer involvement and community impact.

Volunteer Spotlight



We are excited to recognize and celebrate the incredible efforts of **Ryann Ratcliffe**, an Anne Arundel County volunteer, for her exceptional service during the OP&R warehouse inventory mission in Hanover, Maryland.

Since the start of the mission, Ryann has contributed over 50 volunteer hours, helping to sort, identify, and document thousands of emergency medical supplies. Her attention to detail, dependability, and strong work ethic have played a key role in ensuring inventory accountability — a critical component of our emergency preparedness efforts.

Beyond her technical contributions, Ryann stands out as a natural leader. She brings positivity, initiative, and a collaborative spirit to every shift. Her presence uplifts fellow volunteers and staff alike, creating an environment of teamwork and shared purpose. Ryann, your dedication and energy have not gone unnoticed. Thank you for stepping up, showing up, and making a difference. You embody the spirit of service, and we are truly grateful to have you as part of the MRC team!

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