

THE CORPS

Official Newsletter for the Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps



Maryland Responds
Medical Reserve Corps

From April 13–16, emergency planners and MRC Unit Administrators gathered in Baltimore for the 2026 Preparedness Summit, a national event focused on strengthening public health preparedness through collaboration, innovation, and the sharing of best practices. The Summit brought together professionals from federal, state, and local agencies, as well as healthcare coalitions, volunteer organizations, and academia.

On Day 1, Sara Barra, Director of the Office of Preparedness and Response at the Maryland Department of Health, presented on the importance of understanding both the big picture and individual roles within public health response. She highlighted how cross-training across departments strengthens workforce capacity and allows staff to operate at the top of their skillsets. As she shared, “We can’t do all things, but we can do all things together.” Kathleen Long (Baltimore County MRC) and Terry Sapp (Baltimore County Public Health Emergency Preparedness) also presented “Outbreak Response? It’s Time to Get on the MOOV!” Their session featured a demonstration of the Mobile Operations Outreach Vehicle (MOOV), an innovative, fully equipped unit designed to streamline mobile vaccine clinic operations. With features like a lift gate, wheeled supply cases, shelving, and a generator, the MOOV allows teams to quickly transform almost any location into an efficient vaccination site, helping meet communities where they are.

Pictured below are the Maryland representatives who attended the Preparedness Summit, proudly representing the Maryland Department of Health and local jurisdictions.



Caroline County Citizens Preparedness Training



Caroline County MRC partnered with the local health department and emergency services to launch a comprehensive Citizen Preparedness Training course. This ten-week program equipped participants with the skills and confidence to respond effectively in emergencies until professional help arrives. Participants learned how to use fire extinguishers, perform CPR, administer naloxone, and communicate during large-scale incidents, training alongside nurses, paramedics, EMTs, and other public safety professionals. By the end of the program, participants left not only with critical knowledge, but with the confidence, coordination, and readiness to take action when it matters most. Thanks to support from the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), this initiative helped strengthen local preparedness and resilience efforts by training community members to respond when it counts: [Read more here.](#)

Carroll County Hearing & Vision Screenings



The Carroll County Health Department Community Health Services (CHS) Department requested volunteers to assist with hearing and vision screenings at local public schools in partnership with Carroll County Public Schools. These screenings help identify children who may be experiencing hearing or vision issues and connect families with important resources and follow-up care. In some cases, schools are able to help low-income students receive glasses at no cost to their families. Before participating, volunteers completed fingerprinting through the school system, background checks, and required trainings, including instruction on working with children and operating the screening equipment. Volunteers worked alongside Health Department staff to support screenings throughout Carroll County schools and helped ensure students received timely access to these important services.

Pictures submitted by Connie Dellospedale.

Frederick County NIMS & ICS Training

On March 14, the Frederick County MRC hosted a NIMS/ICS Refresher training at the Frederick County Health Department to strengthen volunteer preparedness and emergency response knowledge. The training reviewed the fundamentals of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS), including unified command, accountability, incident action planning, resource management, and integrated communications.

Volunteers also discussed FEMA IS-100 and IS-700 training objectives, the importance of maintaining deployment readiness, and upcoming Maryland Responds readiness tier classifications. In addition, participants received updates on the Maryland Responds Registry and opportunities for continued volunteer engagement, including Child Safety Seat Inspection missions in Frederick County.

The refresher provided volunteers with valuable knowledge and practical guidance to support coordinated and effective emergency response efforts throughout the community.

Maryland Responds Frederick Co. Unit *NIMS/ICS Refresher*

Medical Reserve Corps
Frederick County
Health Department

March 14, 2026



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

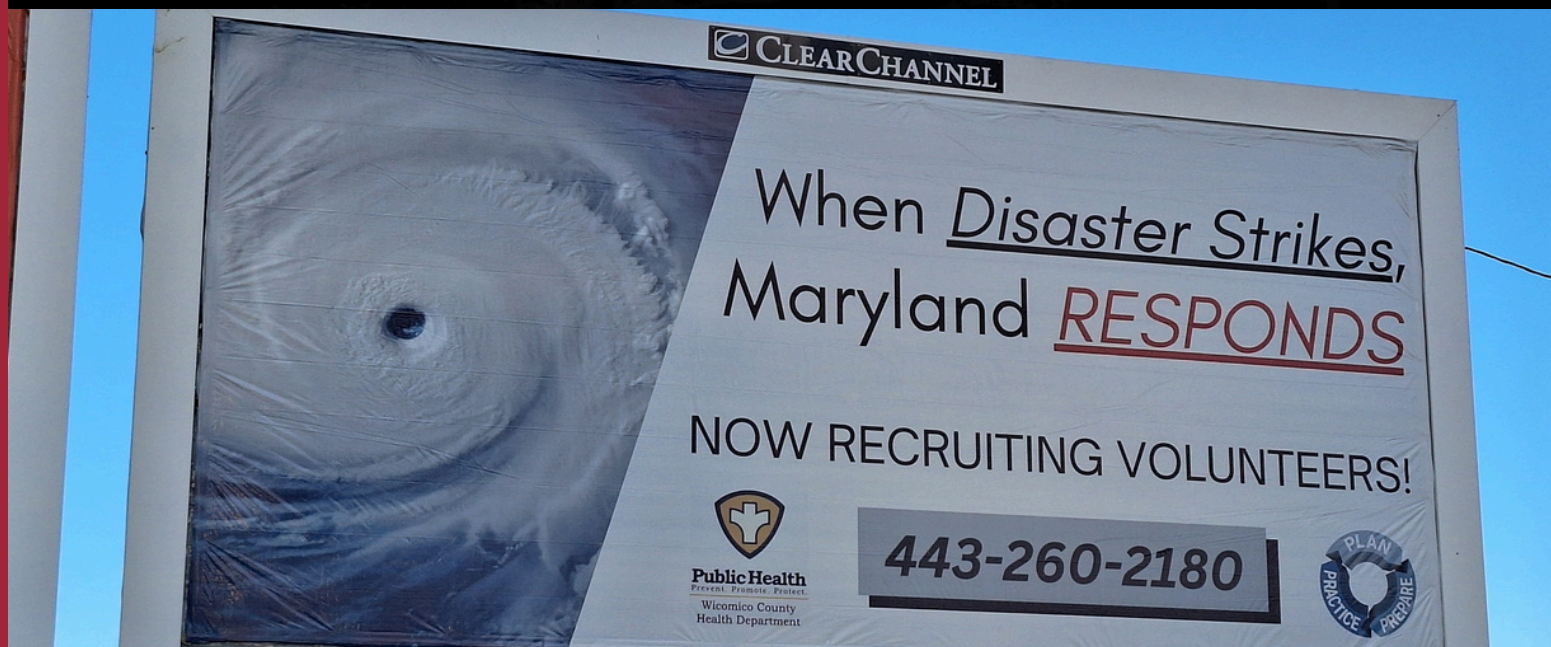
Frederick County Health Department

Maryland Responds Billboard

Several Maryland Responds MRC units, including Wicomico and Charles Counties, recently utilized ASPR MRC-STTRONG grant funding to promote volunteer recruitment and community awareness through billboard advertising campaigns.

In Wicomico County, one of three billboards was placed on Route 13 near Royal Farms by the railroad overpass, close to the Health Department. The photo was taken by Jack Orris, Wicomico County MRC Unit Administrator.

In Charles County, the billboard was displayed throughout the month of April in Waldorf, MD, on the southbound side of Route 301 facing northbound traffic. The location is considered highly visible and is frequently used by the Charles County Sheriff's Office to share important community messaging. The placement offers drivers an extended viewing time as they travel northbound. Photo and location information were provided by Mary Lilly, Charles County MRC Unit Administrator.



Unit Administrator Spotlight



Heather Grove has served with the Caroline County Health Department since 2014 as a Community Health Nurse II. Like many public health staff, she works across several programs, including tobacco prevention and cessation, cannabis education, and emergency preparedness. In her role as MRC Administrator for Caroline County since 2023, Heather has focused on reviving and expanding the local Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps unit through volunteer engagement, training, and community partnerships. One significant accomplishment is the launch of a new Citizens Preparedness Training (CPT) Program. Seventeen individuals completed the training series, including 7 current MRC volunteers and 8 new individuals who joined the MRC as a result of the program. The program is a collaborative effort between the Local Health Department (LHD) and the Department of Emergency Services (DES). Program graduates learned lifesaving skills including situational awareness, de-escalation techniques, CPR/AED, first aid, Stop the Bleed, Narcan administration, fire extinguisher use, and light search and rescue/cribbing. Additionally, participants learned about Points of Distribution (PODs), weather preparedness through a Skywarn trainer, and received a high-level overview of psychological first aid through the program. Heather looks forward to future programming aimed at improving the health, preparedness, and resilience of the rural community where she lives and works.

Unit Administrator Spotlight



Karine Ireland joined the Caroline County Health Department as the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Planner. Prior to this role, she served as Deputy Health Officer at the Talbot County Health Department, where she supported a wide range of public health operations and initiatives. Karine brings extensive experience across multiple sectors, including public health, manufacturing, and human services. She previously served as a Safety Officer for a large manufacturing company on Maryland's Eastern Shore and as Executive Director for a Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) provider in Kent County. Her diverse background provides a strong foundation in leadership, operations, and community-focused services. Karine holds a bachelor's degree in Biology with a minor in Psychology and has completed extensive coursework in finance, developmental disabilities services (DDA), gerontology, and emergency preparedness. In collaboration with Heather, Kristin, and Denton Emergency Services, Karine helped develop a new Citizen Preparedness Training program designed to recruit, train, and connect local residents so they are ready to support their communities during emergencies. The 10-week program successfully graduated its first class on April 21, and plans are underway to offer it again this fall.

Fun Fact: Karine is also a karate instructor with Caroline County Parks and Recreation and enjoys teaching children confidence and discipline.

Safety Tips for Volunteering in Hot Weather

Volunteering outside in the heat can increase your risk of heat stroke and other heat-related illnesses. To help prevent this, volunteers and organizers should familiarize themselves with important heat safety tips and precautions for spending time outdoors in high temperature:

- Stay hydrated! Drink water regularly throughout the day, even if you don't feel thirsty. Consider electrolyte-containing sports drinks to help replace nutrients lost through sweating. Avoid alcohol and beverages high in sugar, as they can contribute to dehydration.
- Take breaks often. Schedule more strenuous activities earlier in the day when temperatures are cooler, and rest frequently in shaded or air-conditioned areas.
- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing sunscreen and reapplying it as directed. Wear a brimmed hat and loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing to stay cool.
- Look out for one another. Encourage fellow volunteers to drink water, cool down, and take breaks as needed.
- *Warning: If you begin to feel faint, dizzy, weak, or overheated, stop all activity immediately and move to a cool place.*



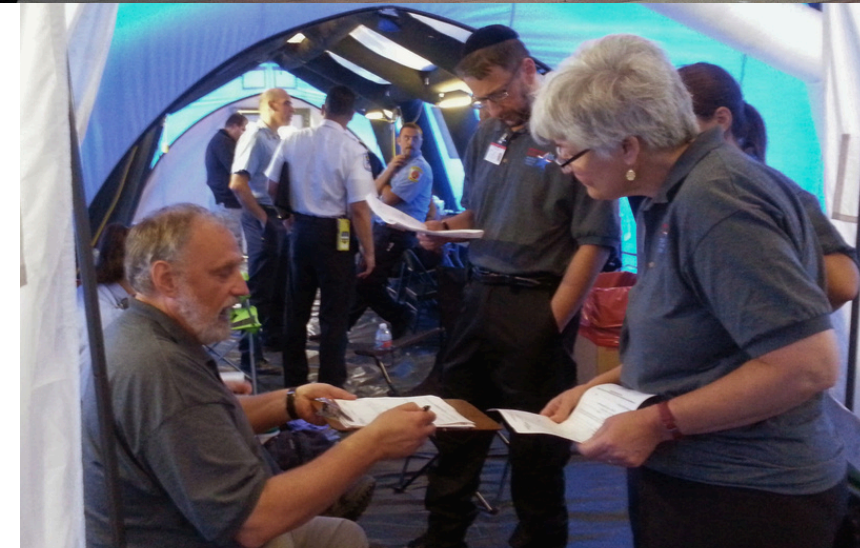
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