

In This Issue

- » Preparedness News ... 1
- » Program Updates ... 2
- » Highlights From the Field ... 4
- » Connect With Maryland Responds ... 6



MARYLAND
Department of Health
Office of Preparedness and Response



The Pulse is brought to you by the
Maryland Office of Preparedness and
Response, Maryland Responds Medical
Reserve Corps State Program.

National Preparedness Month

Contributed by: Lornah Misati, Maryland Responds Program Specialist

During September, preparedness agencies, communities, and individuals across the U.S. celebrated [National Preparedness Month](#) (NPM). It is part of a nation-wide outreach campaign that aims to educate and empower Americans during the month of September and throughout the year to prepare for and respond to emergencies.

The overall theme for this year was "Disasters Happen. Plan Now. Learn How." The goal is to get everyone to take action by making a plan with their community, family, and pets. By doing so, the community at large will know the actions to take for an emergency wherever it may occur.

Even though NPM has come to an end for 2018, we can still use the information provided to prepare for emergencies all year long.

Week 1: Make and Practice Your Plan

Questions to consider when creating your emergency plan are:

- How will I receive alerts?
- What is my shelter plan?
- What is my evacuation route?
- What is my communication plan?

Week 2: Learn Life Saving Skills

Know basic home maintenance such as turning off utilities including natural gas and water. Also, regularly test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

Week 3:

Check Your Insurance Coverage

Having insurance for your home can help greatly when recovering from an emergency or disaster. Check your insurance plan to ensure you have the necessary coverage recommended for your area. Consider purchasing flood insurance if you live in a flood-prone location.

Week 4:

Save for an Emergency

Trying to save for a rainy day? The [Emergency Financial First Aid Kit \(EFFAK\)](#) can help you. The EFFAK helps individuals and families collect and organize critical financial, medical, and household contact information that will be important to have in an emergency.

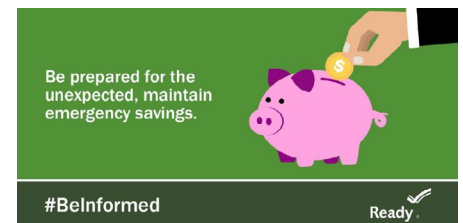


Image: FEMA illustration encouraging financial preparedness through emergency savings.

Planning now, before an emergency, is the key to a better and faster recovery. You may not have control over when an emergency happens, but you can ensure you are prepared to handle the aftermath.

Sources: [FEMA](#) and [Ready.gov](#)

Maryland Responds MRC History

Contributed by: Lornah Misati and Amanda Driesse, Maryland Responds State Administrators

September 11, 2001 marked 17 years since the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Perhaps unknown to our volunteers is the fact that these attacks and the subsequent outpouring of volunteer support were the impetus for the formation of the nation-wide Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) program. Thousands of volunteers, many of them health care workers, offered their services in support of the response and recovery operations. However, at the time, there was no way for emergency managers to verify the background, training, and licenses of the volunteers so many of them could not be utilized. This highlighted the need for a centralized and coordinated approach to verify, activate, and deploy volunteers.

In his January 2002 State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush called on Americans to make a commitment to serve their communities. The result was the formation of USA Freedom Corps and Citizen Corps. The MRC was created under Citizen Corps in July of 2002. The MRC, among other community-based programs, unites health professionals and other skilled professions to volunteer in their communities.

The Maryland MRC State Program is housed within Maryland Department of Health (MDH). It was established in 2004 as the Maryland Health Care Professional Volunteer Corps, then changed to the Maryland Professional Volunteer Corps (MPVC) in 2006. In 2009, the existing MPVC program was incorporated into the newly established Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals program. This merge resulted in what we now know as the Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps. In 2013, local health departments in all Maryland counties and Baltimore City were invited to join the state in utilizing the Maryland Responds Volunteer Registry for local volunteer management. This formed the 24 local Maryland Responds MRC Units which our volunteers are a part of today.

Since its formation, the Maryland Responds MRC has grown to be a statewide program with more

than 5,000 volunteers. The Maryland Responds MRC greatly appreciates the service of our medical and non-medical Maryland Responders. Thank you all for your dedication to the communities and residents of Maryland over the history of our program.



New Unit Administrator for Baltimore County

Contributed by: Lornah Misati, Maryland Responds Program Specialist

Please join us in welcoming Kathleen Long, a new Unit Administrator for the Baltimore County Maryland Responds MRC Unit! Kathleen joined the Baltimore County Public Health Emergency Preparedness team as the Training and Education Coordinator in August and is excited to take on MRC coordination for the county. Kathleen is no stranger to MDH and the Maryland Responds MRC program, as she has previously worked in the Office of Preparedness and Response as a Regional Health Care Preparedness Program Coordinator. Her experience also includes community education and research on West Nile Virus, and she has a passion for public health and eliminating health disparities. On the weekends, you can find Kathleen on the football field as a band member for the Baltimore Marching Ravens.



Image: Kathleen Long, new Baltimore County MRC Unit Administrator.

We are so happy to have you as part of the Maryland Responds network, Kathleen!

Recruiting New Maryland Responders

Contributed by: Lornah Misati, Maryland Responds Program Specialist

The State Program was recently part of two recruitment events. On Sept. 5, the National Cancer Institute, in conjunction with Johns Hopkins University Montgomery County Campus, hosted a Community Preparedness Fair in honor of NPM. The fair was filled with numerous members of the community and other organizations and agencies near by. As participants walked through, they had a chance to talk to Program Specialist, Lornah Misati, and collect materials about Maryland Responds MRC. Despite the hot weather, many came to talk to Lornah and three new volunteers signed up to be part of Maryland Responds.



Image: Program Specialist, Lornah seated by the table display at the Social Workers' Conference.

In honor of National Social Work Month, Maryland Responds participated in the National Association of Social Workers — Maryland Chapter's conference as an exhibitor on Sept. 27 and 28. Lornah spoke to attendees about joining Maryland Responds MRC and even met a some familiar faces from a previous conference. Several participants registered on-site to be volunteers.

Welcome to all our new Maryland Responders!

Do you know anyone who would be interested in joining us? Have them visit:

<https://mdr.health.maryland.gov> to learn more.

Radiation Detection Training

Contributed by: Jerry Truit, Cecil County Department of Health

The Cecil County Health Department is required to test their radiation detection instruments quarterly for operation and calibration. They use this as a training opportunity for staff and volunteers. Two Maryland Responders participated in the most recent Radiation Detection Instrument training. The first step was to unpack and set up two portal monitors. Portal monitors are a type of radiation detection instrument which allows individuals to be screened for radiation contamination by walking through it. A single portal monitor can screen up to 100 people every hour, so in a large-scale radiation event they are very effective at identifying contaminated people.

Health Department staff also showed Responders how people are processed during a radiation emergency. If a portal monitor indicates a person is contaminated by radiation after they go through it twice, that individual goes to a decontamination area. The decontamination area uses hand held radiation monitors to specifically locate where the contamination is on the person. The majority of the time the contamination is on an outer garment, which can be removed. Contamination found on skin or hard objects like jewelry can be washed off using a wet wipe.

Responders were able to use a Ludlum, which is a specific brand of hand held radiation monitor. They used the Ludlum to screen a person who had a hidden radiation source to try to locate the area of contamination on the person. Lastly, Responders learned how to use a dosimeter, which is a device that can carry to monitor their personal radiation exposure levels.

This training helped the Health Department ensure that both staff and volunteers are ready to respond during a radiation emergency.



Image: Unit Administrator Jerry Truit explaining the use of the portal monitor during the training.

Charles County Maryland Responds Activities

Contributed by: Mary Lilly, Charles County Department of Health

On Oct. 3, the Charles County Department of Health (CCDOH) participated in Community Resource Day, an event held to allow people experiencing homelessness to connect with, learn about, and access resources in Charles County. As part of this effort, CCDOH enlisted the help of a Maryland Responds nurse to assist in administering 84 flu vaccinations to attendees. Multiple agencies were able to provide services to over 400 people. The event was a great success.

Coming up in November: The Emergency Preparedness and Response division of CCDOH will conduct an exercise during a community

flu clinic on the first Saturday of November at CCDOH. The event is on utilizing Incident Command structure. As the exercise plan is finalized, a call-down for a few general and medical volunteers will be sent to members of the Charles County Maryland Responds MRC Unit. We hope that all Charles County Maryland Responders will consider participating in this important exercise.

Anne Arundel County's Outreach Events

Contributed by: Jessica Bangel, Anne Arundel County Department of Health

National Night Out

On July 7, the Anne Arundel County Maryland Responds MRC Unit attended the annual National Night Out at the Lula G. Scott Community Center in Shady Side, Md. More than 300 people attended the event, including representatives from the Anne Arundel County Police Department, the Anne Arundel County Fire Department, the Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management, and numerous faith-based organizations and local restaurants.

This year's event paid tribute to the five victims of the Capital Gazette shooting. The Maryland Responds Anne Arundel County Unit distributed emergency preparedness information, fun give away items, and Maryland Responds recruitment fliers.

Opioid Outreach

Due to high interest in the opioid epidemic, the Anne Arundel County Maryland Responds Unit hosted a *Not My Child Panel* on Aug. 27. Not My Child is focused on promoting awareness of the opioid use epidemic by providing the facts about the abuse of prescription drugs and the escalation of heroin use in our communities. The Not My Child event provided an open, honest conversation regarding the use of drugs by children and adults in every community. The seminar's panelists were Anne Arundel County State's Attorney Wes Adams; Lt. Steve Thomas of the Anne Arundel County Police Department; and Caitlin Hall of the Anne Arundel County Department of Health. Fourteen Maryland Responds volunteers attended this great event. For more information about the Not My Child Program, please visit their [website](#).

In response to the success of this event, an Opioid Crisis Response Team was established. Fifteen Anne Arundel County volunteers will receive naloxone administration training in October. This will enable them to share their knowledge from the training in their communities.

Point of Dispensing Exercise

On Wednesday, Oct. 10, the Anne Arundel County Department of Health (AACO DOH), in partnership with the Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management, participated in a full-scale exercise to test emergency response to a "white powder" incident within the county. AACO DOH's role in the exercise was to set up and run a Point of Dispensing (POD). A POD is a specific location pre-screened by the AACO DOH that can be used for distributing medications or vaccines to a large number of people in the event of a public health emergency such as an anthrax attack.

Nineteen Anne Arundel County Maryland Responders participated in the POD exercise, filling roles as greeters, medical questionnaire screeners, medication distributors, and members of the public seeking medication. This POD was a huge success, undoubtedly due to the hard work from the volunteers. If you are an Anne Arundel County Maryland Responder and have questions or want to know how you can get more involved, please contact Jessica Bangel by email at hdbang99@aacounty.org.

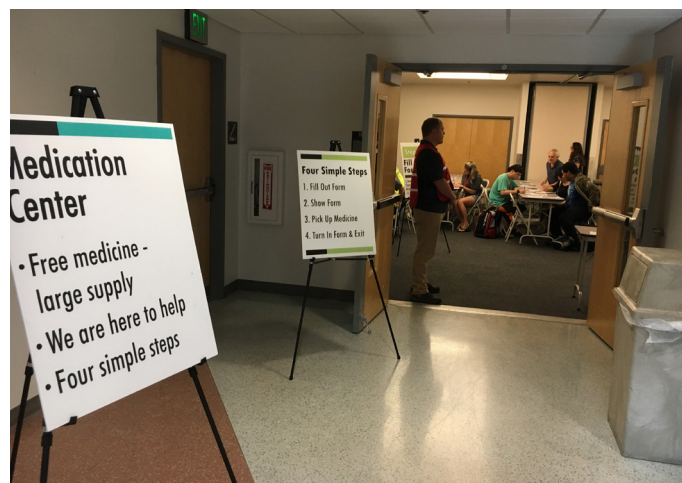


Image: POD entrance with Maryland Responders in the background.

Find Maryland Responds On Social Media

Contributed by: Carin Morrell, Public Information Officer

Are you following Maryland Responds on social media? Connecting with us on social media is a great way to see what we are working on and to discover helpful preparedness resources!

Find videos, pictures, preparedness tips, and more on our Facebook page and be sure to “Like” us!

Maryland Responds shares a Twitter account with the Maryland Office of Preparedness and Response. When you follow this account, you will have access to preparedness resources and tips shared by Maryland Responds and the Office of Preparedness and Response.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MDResponds

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

Our Maryland Responds website also has a lot of great information including what a responder is, how to register and complete your road to readiness, and frequently asked questions. Visit our website at <https://mdr.health.maryland.gov>.

You can also learn more preparedness and response tips from the Office of Preparedness and Response [Facebook](#) and website, <https://preparedness.health.maryland.gov>.

**MARYLAND
RESPONDS**
MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS