

Creating Prepared and Resilient Communities: *The History of the Medical Reserve Corps Program*

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a national network of volunteers—medical and public health professionals and others—who help make their communities stronger and healthier during disasters and every day. Trained as part of a team, local MRC volunteers work within their community's health, preparedness, and response infrastructures to help meet local medical and public health needs during emergencies, and to build resiliency through preparedness, prevention, and public health activities.

The MRC network has evolved to approximately 175,000 volunteers in more than 800 units nationwide.

The idea for the MRC was initiated following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks when spontaneous volunteers, many of them health-care professionals, offered their services in support of response and recovery efforts. Unfortunately, many of these volunteers could not be utilized because emergency managers did not have the capability at the time to verify

their backgrounds, training, or credentials. The anthrax incidents that occurred in October and November of that same year further confirmed that health and medical volunteers could be instrumental in assisting with large-scale disaster or public health emergency responses.

In 2002, President George W. Bush's State of the Union Address called on all Americans to volunteer in support of their country. From that call to action, the MRC Demonstration Project was created. The project began with 42 community-based units of medical, public health, and other volunteers. In 2006, Congress passed the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act, which authorized the Medical Reserve Corps program.

Since those early beginnings, the MRC network has evolved to approximately 175,000 volunteers in more than 800 units nationwide. Throughout its history, the mission has remained the same—to engage volunteers and communities across the country to improve local emergency response capabilities, reduce vulnerabilities and public health risks, and build community preparedness and resilience.



The Medical Reserve Corps is a national network of volunteers ready to respond to emergencies and build resiliency in local communities.



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MRC Timeline: Key Events

