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The Medical Reserve Corps

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The Medical Reserve Corps

When Dr. Richard Carmona was sworn in as Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service, he assumed leadership for the development of a new non-federal entity – the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). The MRC coordinates the skills of practicing and retired physicians, nurses and other health professionals who are eager to volunteer during emergency situations.

Local community officials will develop their own MRC units and identify the duties of MRC volunteers according to specific community needs (e.g., delivering necessary public health services during a crisis, assisting emergency response teams, and providing direct care to those with less serious injuries or other health-related issues). MRC volunteers may also serve a vital role by assisting their communities with ongoing public health needs, such as immunizations and health and nutrition education.

Once established, how the local MRC unit is utilized will be decided locally. The MRC unit – in conjunction with local officials, Citizen Corps Council, and others – will make the decision on activating the community MRC during a local emergency.

Over the past year, the Office of the Surgeon General has sought to engage numerous private sector organizations in the MRC process. All of the major health professions organizations have endorsed the MRC initiative to their members for the invaluable opportunity it provides for an organized approach to assuring that potential volunteers have a framework within which they can be trained to function effectively during emergency situations.

Note: Some of the information contained in this article was taken from the Citizens Corps website (www.citizencorps.gov). For more information on the Medical Reserve Corps initiative, go to: www.medicalreservecorps.gov.

About the Author

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