

MRC Volunteer Support is Available for Seasonal Vaccinations

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The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a national network of volunteers, organized locally to improve the health and safety of their communities. MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals, as well as other community members without healthcare backgrounds. MRC units engage these volunteers to strengthen public health, improve emergency response capabilities, and build community resiliency. They frequently contribute to community health activities that promote healthy habits.

Currently, there are 21 MRC units in Michigan. Five of these units are housed within a local health department (LHD). During the 2009 H1N1 response, MRC volunteers immunized 30 percent of the counties they serve, and provided over 12,000 hours in volunteer service at an estimated salary cost of nearly \$290,000. By assisting with appointment follow-ups, Michigan Care Improvement Registry data entry, or family consultations, MRC volunteers can provide far-reaching investment returns with respect to the diverse challenges LHDs and other response agencies face today.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) encourages and supports MRC involvement in seasonal vaccination surge efforts. MRC volunteers work with local emergency response programs and supplement ongoing public health initiatives such as health education and prevention efforts, immunization programs, and disease screening.

As we head into the busy back-to-school season, this is a reminder that the MRC is willing to partner with LHDs to assist with surge capacity. Michigan's new [immunization waiver education program](#), which went into effect January 1, 2015, provides an opportunity to exercise LHD surge capacity plans. LHDs are encouraged to reach out to a local MRC unit that can help with seasonal surge vaccinations or for future incidents and events.

MRC program information may be found online at www.MedicalReserveCorps.gov or by contacting Virginia Zimmerman, MRC State Coordinator, at zimmermanv@michigan.gov. For more information about the immunization waiver education program, contact your LHD (www.malph.org/directory).

Michigan's Immunization Waiver Program

In December 2014, a new educational requirement for Michigan parents, who opt their children out of getting vaccinated before entering school and childcare, was approved. The new rule requires parents/guardians to speak with their local health department about their concerns and questions regarding immunizations prior to the non-medical waiver being signed.

For more information about Michigan's immunization waiver education program, please visit www.michigan.gov/immunize > *Local Health Departments > Immunization Waiver Information*. Parents may also contact their LHD for more details about this program.