

Massachusetts Medical Reserve Corps



Summer 2008

MRC Volunteers “Sweep” to the Finish Line on the Boston Marathon Medical Team

ON YOUR MARK, GET SET, GO! That is what 25,000 runners and 500,000 spectators heard at the opening of the 112th Boston Marathon, one of the oldest and most prestigious in the world. The event was held on Patriot’s Day, April 21, 2008, and this year, for the first time, Medical Reserve Corps units in Massachusetts were invited to participate as part of the Boston Marathon Medical Team.

Nearly 70 MRC volunteers, including medical and non-medical personnel, worked alongside members of the “Sweep Team,” assisting runners at the finish line. Some of the medical volunteers also participated in the Sweep Team itself, working in small groups triaging runners who encountered difficulties after completing the race. The Sweep Team was actually 16 teams of groups of 6 to 10 members. The Sweep Team also transported runners requiring additional medical assistance to one of the medical tents using wheelchairs and Boston EMS golf carts. Over 900 runners were treated in the medical tents. Non-medical personnel managed medical record keeping.

Reflecting on the success of the event, Region 4A MRC Coordinator Liisa Jackson said, “The marathon offered a unique opportunity for the MRCs to provide community service and medical expertise, as well as enhance our visibility with many emergency service agencies in Massachusetts.” Ms. Jackson said that MRC’s participation in the Boston Marathon was an

effort to expand the group’s scope of work. Last year many MRC volunteers participated in the annual Jimmy Fund Walk, which served as the training ground for this year’s Boston Marathon.



MRC Sweep Team volunteers at the Finish Line.

In preparation for the marathon, MRC volunteers were encouraged to attend a training seminar at Newton Wellesley Hospital and a medical conference at John Hancock Hall. Both seminars provided volunteers with a better understanding of how to triage marathon runners and what possible medical scenarios to expect. The trainings let volunteers observe how their individual roles and responsibilities would play a critical part in the overall execution of the marathon’s medical plan. The trainings were free of charge to the volunteers.

On the morning of the race, MRC volunteers met at 7:00 am at the John Hancock Hall Auditorium to discuss details of the day’s activities. Volunteers completed their paperwork, had their credentials verified and were assigned to various teams. Once the teams were established, they were responsible for staffing individual stations from 11:30 until the end of the marathon.

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What is MRC?

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) system was founded by the federal government shortly after 9/11. The national system brings together people who have health care skills with citizen volunteers. MRC units are trained and prepared to respond as a team to emergencies in their communities. The members may provide education, outreach and various health services throughout the year.

www.mamedicalreservecorps.org

Fenway Park Marketing Campaign to Raise Public Awareness and Encourage Volunteerism

If you've visited Fenway Park recently, you may have noticed some new advertisements. The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) and the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) kicked off a new marketing campaign on Opening Day, April 8, at Fenway Park. Forty new framed posters are on display throughout entrances and exits to the men's and women's restrooms, and over stalls and sinks. The purpose of the advertisement is to raise public awareness of MRC units in the Boston area and encourage local residents to volunteer.

The Medical Reserve Corps hopes to attract a diverse pool of volunteers, both with medical and non-medical expertise, so the posters are targeted to the general public. Ann Scales, Director of Communication at BPHC, said, "The campaign isn't focused on one particular audience, but instead all of Boston and those looking to make a difference in their community." There are two posters which carry the same message but represent the ethnic and racial diversity of Boston.

The Red Sox are legendary for having notable heroes play at Fenway Park like Cy Young, Ted Williams, and David Ortiz, so Fenway Park provides the perfect setting for MRC's campaign: "Be one of Boston's Everyday Heroes." The slogan encourages local residents to get involved in public health emergencies in their communities and participate in some leadership capacity.

BPHC's Public Health Preparedness Office funds the campaign through a grant from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. The posters will be on display throughout the Red Sox season, which, hopefully,



extends to the postseason. The BPHC is also working with its vendor at Fenway Park to honor the achievements of the Medical Reserve Corps during the 9/11 anniversary in September 2008. In addition to Fenway Park, campaign posters can currently be seen around the Boston area.

MRC National Leadership Conference in Portland, Oregon

Massachusetts unit leaders and county coordinators attended the MRC National Leadership Conference in Portland, Oregon from April 8-11. This was a vibrant conference with over 25 Massachusetts participants. National keynote speakers recognized the importance of MRCs and thanked the unit leaders for their participation. Rear Admiral Steven Galston, Acting U.S. Attorney General, highlighted the positive impact that MRCs are having on the resiliency of communities across the nation. Breakout sessions covered a wide variety of topics, including ESAR-VHP integration, mental health in crisis, liability issues, communication and training, and a

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Massachusetts MRC leaders gathered in Portland, Oregon at a conference event.

MRC volunteer and registered nurse Lynda Sheehan said before the event, “Even though it will be a long day and possibly cold, the excitement of being part of an important world-class event like this is worth it.” Following the event, Ms. Sheehan said she enjoyed volunteering and was looking forward to participating next year. Ms. Jackson added, “MRCs fostered a powerful partnership with the Boston Marathon and the officials are looking forward to our participation for many years to come.”



Runner triage was one of the volunteer duties.

★ *Save the Date*

November 20-21, 2008

*New England (Region I) Medical Reserve Corps Conference
Wentworth by the Sea, Portsmouth, NH*

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regional breakout meeting. The biggest issues for most of the units were funding, liability protection and ESAR-VHP integration.

As is often the case, the best part of the conference was the information the participants shared with each other. At one breakfast, for example, MA participants talked with Ohio MRC members about how the state structures its liability protection. In a regional breakout session, the New England state representatives did group exercises, problem solving around emergency issues alongside people from the West Coast, who had some different ideas and experiences.

2008 was the final year of this conference in its current format. Next year, the MRC leaders will meet with ESF-8 (Emergency Support Function #8) federal partners at a conference in Dallas, Texas. The primary agency for ESF-8 is the Department of Health and Human Services, but support agencies include Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, Department of Energy, Department of Justice, Department of Transportation, Department of Veterans Affairs, Agency for International Development, American Red Cross, Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Emergency Management Agency, General Services Administration, National Communications System and the U.S. Postal Service.

★ **For More Information**

or to view a video about Massachusetts MRC units, please visit the website at:
www.mamedicalreservecorps.org

For more details, please contact the MA statewide coordinator:

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For more information about starting a MRC unit in your community, please contact the Region I (New England) USDHHS MRC Coordinator:

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