



Creation of an MRC Advisory Board

Board Composition

An MRC Advisory Board's purpose is to provide guidance and direction to the unit and to serve as the MRC's representatives in the community. A Board can take many forms, but should be composed of key community partners who are familiar with the Medical Reserve Corps and have an ongoing relationship with the unit.

Every Advisory Board is required to have a representative of their Sponsoring Agency/Fiscal Agent as a voting member on the Advisory Board.

It is recommended that Advisory Board members, when appointed, take steps to become active MRC members, although this is not required.

An ideal Board should have enough representation to be effective if one or members misses a meeting, but not so cumbersome that discussion overwhelms action. Seven to twelve members is a good size depending on the size of the unit and geographical area covered.

It is also recommended that the number of members on the Advisory Board be an odd number so that there are no impasses when voting to enact measures which affect the unit.

The Advisory Board should meet at regularly scheduled intervals. The minimum should be quarterly, but more often is fine. When starting a new Board, it is best to meet frequently until the guidance documents have been developed and approved.

Advisory Board members can be invited or asked to apply. If you feel you will struggle to recruit a Board, invitation is better. If you have more prospects than you can use, ask them to submit an application with pointed questions on why they wish to join, what they feel they can contribute, and what they envision for your unit. Then unit leaders (or the existing Board if you are looking to replace a member) can review applications and decide.

Types of representation that should be solicited for membership on the Board include:

A representative of your hospital(s.) This would usually be the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator or Community Engagement Representative for the hospital.

Prominent community partners whose organizations are active with MRC. If your unit works with a soup kitchen, or homeless shelter, or a free medical clinic, these organizations should be approached about serving on the Board.

Representation from any coordinating bodies in your area (may be termed health teams, coalitions, councils, etc. that draw from social services or healthcare services and work towards aligning services and making connections in the community.

Solicit representation in niche areas that reflect your mission as well as areas you are trying to break into. Approach schools, or disability rights organizations, if you feel that representation on your

Board would be improved with subject matter expertise from an area you have struggled with. The Board is designed to give you insight and to be a work group, not simply reflect what you think you know.

Lastly, look within and invite one or more current or former volunteers who are respected leaders in your group to serve on the Board.

Guidance

The Advisory Board should subscribe to a series of guidance documents which outline the means in which they function and communicate within the group and with external parties. In particular, an Advisory Board should create bylaws which outlines the leadership structure, any term limits, and major tasks to be performed. Further documents such as how to conduct a meeting (whether an agenda and minutes will be used, how order will be kept, what form of voting structure will be utilized) should be drawn up.

Other documents that all units should have and that the Board will be responsible for creating include the following:

- Mission/Vision/Goals statements
- Budget
- Strategic Plan
- Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Plan
- Training Plan/Calendar
- Standard Operating Procedures/Standard Operating Guidance

Tasks

The Board is responsible for creating, maintaining and following the above documents for the purpose of running the unit.

The Board does this in conjunction with its Unit Coordinator(s) who is a non-voting member of the Board and is responsible for carrying out the daily unit tasks at the direction of the Board.

The Board will also vote on upcoming initiatives such as whether to pursue a specific partnership or project for the unit, what trainings to offer, what items to budget for, etc.

The Board is responsible for weighing in on disciplinary issues within the unit that can't be solved by the Unit Coordinator working directly with the volunteer. If the Board can't solve the difficulty to the satisfaction of the unit, it would then be brought to the attention of the State Coordinator.

The Board acts as the MRC's representatives in the community, promoting the MRC, encouraging partnership and volunteerism, and taking an active role in attendance at MRC events. It is critical, particularly if the Advisory Board members are not MRC volunteers themselves, that they have opportunity to get to know and interact with the volunteers they serve.