



# Health and Human Services **MEDIA RELEASE**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 3, 2015

## **National Volunteer Week is April 12-18**

### ***Medical Reserve Corps of Sarasota County makes a difference in the community***

SARASOTA COUNTY — National Volunteer Week is April 12-18. The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) of Sarasota County, which is part of a national network of local volunteers, exemplifies how a committed team of volunteers can make a difference in the health, safety and resiliency of our communities. MRC units across the nation will hold volunteer recognition events, in addition to supporting activities that strengthen public health and emergency preparedness.

Volunteers can serve as MRC leaders; provide medical care, administer vaccines and dispense medications; offer health education as part of a local public health initiative; provide counseling for victims, families and responders; promote preparedness; and contribute administrative, logistical and communications support.

The Sarasota County MRC's team of more than 80 medical and public health professionals collaborate with Sarasota County Emergency Management, the Sarasota Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD), Suncoast Disaster Healthcare Coalition, and other partners to augment the existing infrastructure. They provide leadership, logistics and other support, as well as educate members of our community about emergency preparedness. Members are offered annual basic life support training, as well as other training to enhance their response skills for times of disaster.



"The MRC learns to respond effectively as a team in the event of an emergency," said Tammi Canelli, MRC Coordinator. "MRC volunteers are frequently asked to participate in community and agency exercises. MRC Sarasota volunteers contributed more than 253 volunteer hours for the first half of this fiscal year. "

Other roles include providing public health services -- flu vaccinations, blood pressure and diabetes screening – to help improve the health of the people in the community. These services reach the young, elderly or underserved which can also help to reduce their vulnerability in the community, especially during a disaster.

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#### **MEDIA NOTES:**

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"The MRC has a tremendous impact at a very low cost to federal, state or local government," said Capt. Rob Tosatto, MRC Director in the Office of the Surgeon General. "It has a high return on investment, is value added to the community, and has a direct impact on many individuals."

In general, healthier people are less susceptible to injury and illness following disaster. This minimizes health disparities and increases personal and community-wide resiliency.

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) was created in 2002 in response to the need for an organized system for medical and public health professionals who could be ready to respond to emergencies as well as help to improve public health on a day-to-day basis.

Since its inception, the MRC's mission has reflected the priorities of the Surgeon General: increasing disease prevention, eliminating health disparities, improving health literacy, and focusing on becoming a healthy and fit nation.

[National Volunteer Week](#) has grown exponentially in scope each year since, drawing the support and endorsement of all subsequent U.S. presidents, governors, mayors and other respected elected officials.

"National Volunteer Week is a time to recognize the difference that volunteers can make on a daily basis as they lead by example — not only encouraging the people they help, but motivating others to serve as well," said Canelli. "Volunteering not only provides the great satisfaction of helping others, but also can provide you with renewed creativity, motivation and vision that can carry over into your personal and professional life."

For more information about the MRC program, and to find out how you can get involved, visit [www.mrcsarasota.com](http://www.mrcsarasota.com). For information about the national MRC network, visit [www.facebook.com/medicalreservecorps](https://www.facebook.com/medicalreservecorps), or contact [MRCcontact@hhs.gov](mailto:MRCcontact@hhs.gov).

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View the complete policy at [www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx)

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