



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS YEAR IN REVIEW

2022



University of Minnesota
Health Emergency Response Office

LETTER FROM THE HERO DIRECTOR



Welcome to the University of Minnesota Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) Year in Review. Thank you for your interest, and if you are one of our MRC members, thank you for your dedication to service, both on our campus and in the community. In this report, you will find some highlights selected by our team from the many important accomplishments of 2022 - a year of transition back to preparedness priorities that were paused due to the COVID pandemic. The University of Minnesota MRC was deployed 32 times in response to COVID-19. I am humbled by the magnitude of our members' contributions over such an extended period of time while individual professional and personal lives were also greatly impacted by the pandemic.

The MRC structure was created by the federal government following the tragedies of September 11, 2001. Today, the national MRC network comprises more than 200,000 volunteers in roughly 800 community-based units located throughout the United States and its territories. Local units are numbered based on order of official designation. The University of Minnesota MRC received our federal designation in April 2004. We are "Unit #4". In those early days, the University of Minnesota joined the MRC program with the belief that we had something important to offer - the largest collection of health faculty, staff, and students in Minnesota - and a commitment to serving both our campus and the broader community when needed. As co-founder of the University of Minnesota MRC in partnership with Dr. Frank Cerra, I honestly was unsure in 2004 if this idea would take flight. What we have accomplished together across health disciplines and in so many different ways is incredible!

My sincere thanks to the Health Emergency Response Office team who support this effort from the largest plans and protocols to the smallest details in support of our members. My heartfelt gratitude, in particular, to Kathy Berlin, the MRC's tireless and fearless leader for the past 16 years. I wish her all the best in her new adventures. As we approach our 20th anniversary, we know Kathy's legacy of compassion and service will be reflected in the work of the University of Minnesota MRC for the next 20 years and beyond.

LETTER FROM THE MRC COORDINATOR



REFLECTIONS

Over the past 16 years in my role as the University of Minnesota Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Coordinator, I have been inspired and awed by the generosity of spirit, skills, and expertise of our members. This generosity of spirit is at the heart of our MRC unit's ability to effectively support communities during public health emergencies. The combination of enthusiastic, creative thinking students coupled with knowledgeable, dedicated, and highly skilled staff and faculty has created an MRC unit capable of responding to emergencies and disasters of all types and sizes. The University of Minnesota MRC currently has 2800 members, which makes it the largest MRC in the State of Minnesota and one of the largest MRCs in the country. However, the strength of our MRC unit is not reflected so much in the number of members, but in the caliber and diversity of our membership. The variety and quality of our membership is what makes our MRC unit a vibrant resource for the university community as well as communities throughout the state and country. It has been an honor to witness the consistent display of University of Minnesota MRC members' commitment to community service over the years.

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION

Life offers us endless options for how we may choose to spend our time. I appreciate members' willingness to include involvement in the MRC amongst the myriad of activities that merit their time and energy. The commitment to serving our communities is a shared value that has provided a sense of kinship with MRC members; a kinship that I have treasured throughout my time at the University and that I will carry with me as I move toward a new chapter in my life.

LOOKING FORWARD

With the strong leadership of Jill DeBoer, along with a small and mighty group of public health professionals, the unit is poised to strengthen its capability to serve the University of Minnesota during public health emergencies as well as exemplify the University's mission of public outreach to communities seeking support during a crisis.

"We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say "It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem." Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes."

-Fred Rogers

Health Emergency Response Office & University of Minnesota Medical Reserve Corps

HEALTH EMERGENCY RESPONSE OFFICE

The Health Emergency Response Office (HERO) is charged with ensuring health incidents and emergencies affecting the University community are addressed in a timely, efficient, and effective manner utilizing resources and expertise available both internal and external to the University in partnership with the Campus Public Health Officer.

HERO is also charged with coordinating and organizing the university's diverse and extensive health resources to assist community partners during local, state, or national health emergencies.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

The University of Minnesota Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is the largest and most visible activity within HERO and is designed to coordinate and organize campus resources to assist campus and community partners during local, state, and national health emergencies. The University of Minnesota MRC is part of a national initiative to mobilize and coordinate volunteers at the local level to assist in response to public health crises or large-scale disasters.

The University of Minnesota MRC provides a structure to pre- identify, train, credential and organize medical and public health professionals, as well as non-clinical personnel to supplement and support health emergency response systems.

In addition to the dual mission of response support on the campus and in the community, the University of Minnesota MRC provides unique, interdisciplinary educational and experiential opportunities for health sciences students, staff, and faculty.

MRC BY THE NUMBERS 2022

2,279

TOTAL MEMBERS



205

FACULTY

320

STAFF

742

UNDERGRAD STUDENTS

893

GRAD STUDENTS

49

MEDICAL & PHARMACY RESIDENTS

62

SCHOOL OF NURSING ALUMNI

915

MEMBERS SPEAK MORE THAN 1 LANGUAGE

44

DIFFERENT LANGUAGES REPRESENTED ACROSS MEMBERS



618

MEMBERS HOLD A PROFESSIONAL LICENSE



749

VOLUNTEER HOURS

318 hrs

MTEST COVID-19 TESTING

64 hrs

CAMPUS COVID-19 VACCINATION CLINICS

313 hrs

AFGHAN EVACUEES MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

54 hrs

AFGHAN VACCINATION SUPPORT



DEPLOYMENTS, EXERCISES, AND DRILLS

Despite the slowing of COVID 19 response needs over the past year, the University of Minnesota MRC has remained active supporting maintenance COVID responses as well as new needs. This year also allowed us to refocus our efforts to plan for and practice responses for other important emergency scenarios, such as mass casualty response planning and support.

MRC MEMBER NOTIFICATION DRILL

In November 2022, the MRC conducted a notification drill to familiarize members with the manner in which they will be notified of an urgent MRC deployment (text and email) and allow them to practice signing up for a shift using Shiftboard. In addition to providing members the experience of just-in-time notifications and needed responses, this drill allowed HERO staff the opportunity to practice sending important messages in a timely manner using dedicated technology.

DEPLOYMENT

SOCIAL SUPPORT AND COVID VACCINATIONS FOR NEWLY ARRIVED AFGHAN FAMILIES IN MN



**Welcome to
Minnesota**
2021-22 Afghan Health Response

Members of the Behavioral Health Support Strike Team were deployed from September 2021 to May 2022 supporting Afghan families and individuals relocated to Minnesota. MRC members provided in person and virtual social support visits to assess and triage psychological and emotional support needs for these new neighbors. Other MRC members also supported COVID vaccination clinics for the evacuees, in collaboration with Community University Health Care Center (CUHCC) and MHealth Fairview.

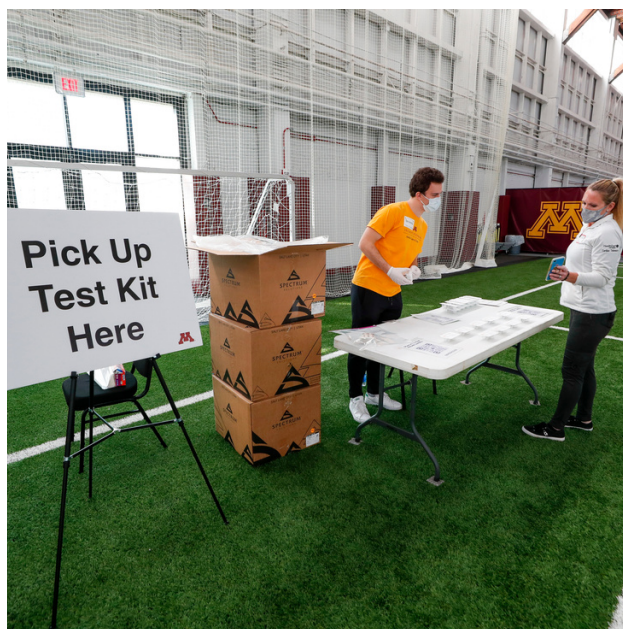
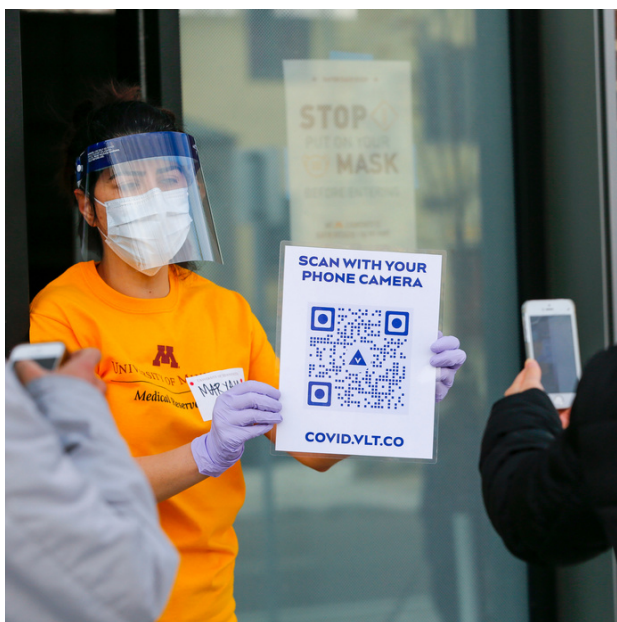
"The memory that stands out to me the most was when the colleague sitting next to me went to give the vaccination to a little girl, she noted an unusual scar in her upper arm. She knew it was not a previous vaccination scar so she asked the father. He stated that his daughter had been shot just before they got on the plane to leave Kabul. In that moment I realized that my participation in MRC allows me to both vaccinate against disease, and offer a step toward healing past wounds."

-Teddie Potter PhD, RN

DEPLOYMENT

COVID TESTING

In April 2022, MRC members completed their final shifts supporting University of Minnesota COVID testing at the Rec Well MTest site. MRC members had filled shifts continuously since November 2020, making this the longest deployment in our MRC's history. In the end, MRC members served a total of **318 hours and 121 shifts** to test University students, staff and faculty to help mitigate the pandemic on campus.



"I was grateful to have a role in supporting my community during the response to COVID-19. I remember the feeling of hope that was bolstered by people who arrived with so much excitement to receive their vaccinations or get tested. Despite the circumstances, I loved being able to connect with fellow MRC and community members."

-Brita Larsen, Student Advisory Group Member

EXERCISE

OPERATION GOPHER RESCUE

In July 2022, HERO staff and MRC members participated in Operation Gopher Rescue with University of Minnesota Police Department and public safety partners. This live, real-time active shooter response exercise allowed us to practice deployment of our Witness Support Team (WST). This specialized team, the only of its kind in the nation, provides behavioral health, non-emergency medical, and basic needs support to witnesses and survivors of a mass casualty event on campus. The exercise included WST members from Boynton's Mental Health Clinic and Student Counseling Services, two important partners in this work.



"Like so many people, this type of event is always on our mind even though we hope it never happens. Being able to exercise this unique Witness Support Team was so important and invaluable. Not only do we gain practice and insights to improve our work, but also a sense of empowerment in an otherwise overwhelming and traumatic situation. That itself is also very important."

- Catherine Harrison, Witness Support Team

OUR PARTNERS

The University of Minnesota MRC owes much of its success to strong partnerships, including direct relationships with groups listed below, or through the broader planning and collaboration work of the Health Emergency Response Office. We are grateful for the various ways these relationships allow for the care and safeguarding of campus communities during an emergency.



Healthcare

We work with our healthcare partners on and around campus to meet urgent service delivery needs, from COVID vaccinations & testing to mental health support during a crisis event. These partnerships provide meaningful opportunities for service for MRC members and ensure strong coordination in planning for public health and medical responses.

- Campus Public Health Officer, Office of Academic Clinical Affairs
- Boynton Health
- Community University Health Care Center (CUHCC)
- MHealth Fairview
- Metro Health & Medical Preparedness Coalition
- Behavioral Health Collaborative for Disaster Response: Student Counseling Services, Boynton Health



State and local public health

State and local public health agencies are important partners for collaboration, plan development, and opportunities for the University of Minnesota MRC to serve Minnesota communities.

- Minnesota Department of Health: Vaccine Preventable Disease, Immigrant and Refugee Health, Behavioral Health Response Team
- Local Public Health: City and County Health departments, Metro MRC Coordinators workgroup, and Medical Countermeasure workgroup

PARTNERS CONT.



Campus Operations

Our campus operations partners provide the critical logistical support for our MRC drills and deployments. The robust infrastructure of their resources and expertise are what allow our MRC to operate with ease and efficiency.

- Parking and Transportation Services
- M Dining
- Facilities Management
- Housing & Residential Life
- University Relations
- Office of Information Technology
- Department of Environmental Health and Safety



Public Safety and Emergency Management

From our 24/7 Alert System to onsite volunteer safety and security, campus safety partners ensure swift, safe, and coordinated responses for our MRC members. They are also key partners for HERO to develop the plans under which the MRC operates.

- University of Minnesota Police Department
- Public Safety Emergency Communications Center
- Department of Emergency Management



Campus Health Sciences Schools

The University of Minnesota MRC benefits from the uniqueness of having all major health sciences schools co-located on one campus. The large, diverse, and dedicated body of students, staff and faculty from these schools are what make our MRC one of the largest and strongest in the country.

Partnerships include the School of Nursing, the Medical School, the College of Pharmacy, the School of Dentistry, the School of Public Health, the College of Veterinary Medicine, and Affiliated health programs in Allied Health Sciences, Social Work, and the Psychology Department.

RESPOND, INNOVATE, SUSTAIN, AND EQUIP (RISE) AWARD



In May, the University of Minnesota MRC was the recipient of a \$75,000 award from the National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO). The **RISE** Award provides funding to **Respond, Innovate, Sustain** and **Equip** MRC units in COVID response efforts. The funding allowed us to hire the incoming MRC Coordinator in advance of Kathy Berlin's retirement, which is critical for a sustainable succession plan. We also purchased language assistance technology to better meet the diverse language needs on campus during emergency responses.





LOOKING AHEAD

We enter 2023 with thanks for all the work of our MRC members over the years, and excitement for what lies ahead. Perhaps the best example of this, we are filled with bittersweet gratitude for the leadership of Kathy Berlin over the past 16 years, and we are thrilled to welcome Courtney Wetternach as the new MRC Coordinator. While the work of MRC coordination was just one of Kathy's many responsibilities, we are making this role full time to reflect its importance and effort. You can read more about Courtney and her years of experience and expertise in emergency preparedness [here](#).

In the year ahead we will get back to some basics like regular strike team meetings, but also new endeavors like a renewed recruitment campaign and strategic planning process. We will also prepare to celebrate the MRC's 20th anniversary in 2024. We look forward to the journey ahead and are excited to have you with us on it. Thank you for your continued support of the University of Minnesota Medical Reserve Corps!



THANK YOU



medicalreserve@umn.edu



Mayo Building C386, 420 Delaware St. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455



<https://uhs.umn.edu/health-emergency-response-office/>

