

## **Public Health Preparedness: Medical Reserve Corps**

By Kristen Hildreth, Health Promotion Coordinator

(This is part of a series of articles dedicated to public health preparedness.)

Any response to an emergency, whether it is a pandemic outbreak or natural disaster, will need the involvement and cooperation of Medina County citizens. You will play a vital role in any response.

One strategy for ensuring an effective response is the Medical Reserve Corps, or MRC, which coordinates the skills of healthcare professionals who are eager to address their community's ongoing public health needs and to volunteer to serve their community during large-scale emergency situations. During a pandemic, volunteers will be needed to help our community respond.

Medical Reserve Corps are community-based and function as a way to locally organize and utilize volunteers who want to donate their time and expertise to prepare for and respond to emergencies. “Corps” refers to any organized body of individuals with a similar function. MRC volunteers supplement existing emergency and public health resources.

MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals such as physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, veterinarians, and epidemiologists. Many community members—interpreters, chaplains, office workers, legal advisors, and others—can fill key support positions.

The Medina County Health Department, in cooperation with the County Commissioners and the Medina County Emergency Management Agency, is beginning to develop a Medical Reserve Corps. While still in the early stages of development, we are establishing a database of residents who would be willing to be a part of our MRC. We are looking for:

- Licensed medical professionals
- Non-licensed volunteers with medical background
- Mental health professionals
- Volunteers with other specialties
- Volunteers who are not in the medical or mental health field, but are willing to provide basic support

If you are interested in being a part of the Medina County MRC, please e-mail your name and phone number to [khildreth@medinahealth.org](mailto:khildreth@medinahealth.org), or call (330) 723-9688, (330) 220-6265, or (330) 336-4136. Your name will be added to our list, and we will contact you to gather more details about your skills, licensure, and availability.

### **Stay informed about pandemic influenza and be prepared to respond.**

Consult [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov) frequently for updates on national and international information on pandemic influenza. Use national and local pandemic hotlines that will be established in the event of a global influenza outbreak. Listen to radio and television and read media stories about pandemic flu.