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## NEWS RELEASE

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## Eastern Idaho Medical Reserve Corps Looking for Volunteers

Eastern Idaho Public Health District is looking for individuals who are interested in helping strengthen the public health infrastructure and improving emergency preparedness in their local communities. If you have extra time on your hands and have a desire to help, the Eastern Idaho Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) may be for you! A medical background is not required to join the MRC.

### What is the Medical Reserve Corps?

Nationally, the Medical Reserve Corps was founded after President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address, in which he asked all Americans to volunteer in support of their country. The MRC is a specialized component of Citizen Corps, a national network of volunteers dedicated to ensuring hometown security. MRC units are community-based and function as a way to locally organize and utilize volunteers – medical professionals and others – who want to donate their time and expertise to promote healthy living throughout the year, and to prepare for and respond to emergencies. MRC volunteers supplement existing local emergency and public health resources. MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals such as physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, veterinarians, and epidemiologists. Other community members, such as interpreters, chaplains, office worker, and legal advisors, can fill other vital support positions.

### What can MRC volunteers do?

- **Support** local public health initiatives and the goals of the Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy People 2010, while advancing the priorities of the Surgeon General that include promoting disease prevention, improving health literacy, eliminating health disparities, and enhancing public health preparedness.
- **Assist** local hospitals and health departments with surge personnel needs.
- **Participate** in mass prophylaxis and vaccination exercises and community disaster drills. Eastern Idaho Medical Reserve Corps volunteers recently helped Eastern Idaho Public Health District with the H1N1 flu pandemic response.
- **Train** with local emergency response partners.
- **Respond** as needed to local, state, or national disasters.

### What training is needed to be a MRC Volunteer?

When you sign up as a MRC volunteer, you will receive an orientation that will include:

- Basic overview of preparedness efforts in Eastern Idaho
- Incident Command Training
- Overview of the Strategic National Stockpile
- Opportunities for training with other community response partners

### **How much time do I need to commit to the MRC?**

MRC volunteers can devote as much or as little of their time to the program as they want. All volunteers receive the MRC newsletter to keep them up-to-date on activities and event involving the MRC as well as be advised of major emergency events in our region. Volunteers can choose to participate in additional trainings and drills.

### **How does one sign up for the MRC?**

To learn more about the Eastern Idaho Medical Reserve Corps, you may visit Eastern Idaho Public Health District's website at [www.idaho.gov/phd7](http://www.idaho.gov/phd7) or call Holly Peterson at 208-533-3145. You may also go to [www.volunteeridaho.com](http://www.volunteeridaho.com) to register to become a MRC volunteer.

Pictured below: MRC Volunteer, Jane McLaughlin (far right), helps Eastern Idaho Public Health District staff during a mass vaccination clinic for H1N1 in the fall of 2009.

