

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Howard County Medical Reserve Corps Unit Receives \$25,000 National Award

Columbia, MD – The Howard County [Medical Reserve Corps \(MRC\) unit](#), overseen by the Howard County Health Department, is the recipient of a \$25,000 MRC COVID-19 Respond, Innovate, Sustain, and Equip (RISE) Award given by the [National Association of County and City Health Officials \(NACCHO\)](#). These funds will be used to provide additional equipment and enhance the unit's training capacity to ensure continued preparation for any future health-related emergencies.

"The health professionals and community members who volunteer their time to serve in our local MRC unit have been critical in assisting with Howard County Health Department's COVID-19 response," said Howard County Health Officer Dr. Maura Rossman. "This additional funding will ensure that the Howard County MRC remains properly equipped, trained, and prepared to respond to emerging public health needs."

"The Medical Reserve Corps are an extraordinary group of volunteers who have been essential as our community responded to the COVID-19 pandemic," said Howard County Executive Calvin Ball. "We're so pleased to see our MRC unit recognized, and the additional resources will ensure that our community is prepared to address public health emergencies in the future."

The MRC is a national network of volunteers, organized locally to improve the health and safety of their communities. In Howard County, there are 854 volunteers registered in the unit. This group completed nearly 2,000 hours of volunteer work in FY2021, saving the Health Department more than \$100,000. Work performed by the MRC includes: staffing at COVID-19 vaccination and testing clinics, administration of Psychological First Aid training, and projects related to improved accessibility at Point of Dispensing (PODs) sites.

These awards, made possible through a cooperative agreement with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response's Medical Reserve Corps Program Office, will provide resources to the MRC network to support COVID-19 response efforts. Awards totaling \$9.5 million will support 186 units and state coordinators to build the capacity for the MRC to respond, innovate to evolving requirements, sustain staffing requirements, and equip units with resources needed to support their missions.

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According to NACCHO's [2020 Network Profile of the Medical Reserve Corps](#), more than half of units (63%) expressed that additional unit funding was their greatest need. Funding for these awards comes through the [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#) and is a direct result of NACCHO's advocacy work to [expand support for the Medical Reserve Corps](#).

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) represents the nation's nearly 3,000 local governmental health departments. These city, county, metropolitan, district, and tribal departments work every day to protect and promote health and well-being for all people in their communities. For more information about NACCHO, please visit www.naccho.org.

For more information about the Howard County MRC Unit and how anyone, regardless of medical training, can volunteer, visit <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/health/emergency-preparedness>.

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