

GEORGIA EAST METRO MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

NEWSLETTER

Headline News

Training, Preparing, Responding:

How MRC Builds More Resilient Communities

The Administration for Strategic Preparedness & Response's (ASPR) latest blog reminds us just how vital MRC volunteers are. In 2025 alone, MRC units nationwide contributed nearly 300,000 hours of service valued at \$11.7 million, proving that prepared communities start with people who show up. [Read more...](#)

Quick Links

[ASPR's Response to the 2026 Hantavirus Outbreak](#)

[CDC Travelers' Health](#)

Mission Ready MRC GEM Volunteers in Action

In April's training, members focused on staying Mission Ready by completing their American Heart Association Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification. Seasoned members renewed their credentials while new volunteers had the opportunity to get certified, strengthening our team's ability to respond when it matters most.



BLS

A Hero Among Us MRC GEM Volunteer Spotlight Featuring:

Suleima Salgado

MRC GEM proudly recognizes Suleima Salgado for her 16 years of dedicated service and her induction into the MRC GEM Hall of Fame in 2025. She is a telemedicine consultant and former Director of Communications & Health Promotions for GNR Health. Suleima has been on the front lines of public health emergencies, from the COVID pandemic to bringing crisis communication expertise and a commitment to health equity to every role she holds. As a current MRC GEM Board of Directors member, she continues to strengthen our mission and our community.



We are proud to recognize her as the...

June 2026 MRC GEM Hero Among Us



In May, MRC GEM members visited the Gwinnett County Fire Training Academy in Dacula, GA for an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour led by Gwinnett County firefighters. Members gained valuable safety information and a deeper appreciation for the training and dedication that goes into emergency response.



MRC-GEM is an all-volunteer nonprofit whose mission is to augment community health operations during large-scale emergencies, aid response to pressing health care needs, and improve community emergency preparedness. Our volunteers speak over 70 different languages and dialects, allowing us to serve Georgia's Gwinnett, Newton, and Rockdale Counties, a highly diverse population of well over 1.2 million people. COVID is a perfect example.

Heroes aren't born. They Volunteer!

The Preparedness Pot: Insight & Inside MRC GEM

Where we stir together timely updates, expert insights, and must-know information to keep you ready and in the know.

Science Moves Fast. Trust Takes Time.

By Dr. Stacia Wilson & Sang Nguyen, MPH



Dr. Stacia Wilson
Editor-in-Chief
MRC GEM Newsletter

With hantavirus and Ebola in the headlines, infectious disease prevention is once again at the forefront of public concern. While these diseases are rare in many places, outbreaks remind us of how interconnected global health is and how quickly diseases can impact communities, challenge healthcare systems, and disrupt daily life. In such moments, vaccines and proven public health measures remain some of the most effective tools to reduce disease spread, protect vulnerable populations, and save lives.

All the while, vaccine science is rapidly advancing. Researchers are exploring the potential of mRNA technology. While most have heard about mRNA vaccines during COVID-19, the technology has been studied for decades. mRNA vaccines are developed and updated more quickly than traditional methods, so researchers believe they could improve how future vaccines are developed and updated to address emerging diseases. Scientists are currently exploring how it can address a range of health challenges, including Ebola, HIV, rabies, flu, and certain cancers.¹⁻⁴

For many communities, however, vaccine conversations must extend past the science alone. Public trust, access to care, cost, and past experiences with the healthcare system all influence how community members think about vaccines. As mRNA technology advances, public health practitioners, healthcare providers, researchers, and community leaders must work together to communicate vaccine information clearly, transparently, and in culturally responsive ways. Building vaccine confidence and trust is not about forcing agreement; instead, it is about creating space for honest, empathetic dialogue so that questions can be answered respectfully, and help communities make informed decisions about vaccinations.

Open, respectful conversations can spark meaningful behavior change. These discussions matter as new medical technologies emerge. Scientific innovation is fast, but trust builds slowly through genuine community partnerships. Vaccine communications should not only use data, but also listen to and amplify community concerns. Through active listening and engagement, communities are more likely to support public health interventions because they see their role in the broader effort. Equity must be at the center of these efforts. Vaccine and healthcare resources are not evenly distributed, especially for rural, low-income, immigrant, and historically marginalized communities.



Sang Nguyen, MPH
Immunization Health Educator
GNR Public Health

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Local partnerships, such as collaborations between the Georgia East Metro Health District Medical Reserve Corps and GNR Public Health, the health department that serves Gwinnett, Newton, and Rockdale counties, demonstrate how community-based efforts strengthen vaccine confidence. Community outreach, education initiatives, and community collaboration lay the groundwork for increased vaccine confidence and future health innovations, including mRNA-based vaccine technologies.



Ultimately, public health interventions and vaccines depend not only on scientific breakthroughs but also on the strength of relationships between institutions and the communities we serve. Building trust, fostering collaboration, and creating an accessible healthcare system change ensure that future innovations benefit all community members. By combining transparent and compassionate communication with community-based partnerships, we can move toward a direction where lifesaving innovations and technologies are not only effective but also widely understood, highly trusted, and extremely accessible to everyone.

References

1. Decades in the Making: mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines | NIAID: National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. April 4, 2024. Accessed May 19, 2026. <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/diseases-conditions/decades-making-mrna-covid-19-vaccines>
2. World-changing mRNA vaccines. Accessed May 19, 2026. <https://www.pennmedicine.org/about/pioneering-the-future-of-medicine/mrna>
3. Deyhimfar R, Izady M, Shoghi M, et al. The clinical impact of mRNA therapeutics in the treatment of cancers, infections, genetic disorders, and autoimmune diseases. *Heliyon*. 2024;10(5). doi:10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e26971
4. Li J, Liu Y, Dai J, et al. mRNA Vaccines: Current Applications and Future Directions. *MedComm*. 2025;6(11):e70434. doi:10.1002/mco2.70434

Got a Story to Share?

We'd love to hear from you! If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the MRC GEM Newsletter, please email Dr. Stacia Wilson at stacia@mrcgem.com

Your contributions help keep our community informed, engaged, and prepared!

#MRCGEM #StayConnected

TRAINING CORNER: SHARPEN YOUR SKILLS

Annual Volunteer Summit - Members Only June 6- June 7, 2026

Family Preparedness July 18, 2026

Emergency Communication Media August 15, 2026

Unless otherwise noted, programs are on the third Saturday of each month, from 9 AM to 12 noon, at
GNR Public Health

2570 Riverside Parkway, Lawrenceville, GA 30046.

Members' guests and prospective members are welcome to join us on a space-available basis for most programs.

Attention Please...

The 2026 training schedule is now available!

To add events to your calendar or to find out more about upcoming member events, Click the link below:



[MRC GEM Schedule](#)

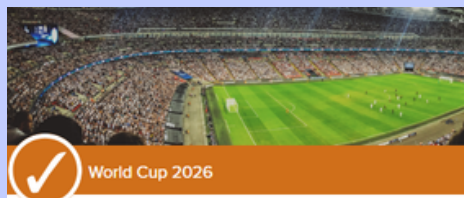
Want to know about events beyond MRC GEM? We send out a separate newsletter featuring community events and trainings. To get on the list, simply email membership@mrcgem.com with the subject line "Sign up for VTO."

Building public trust means recognizing false narratives and responding with clear, accurate, easy-to-understand information.

PUBLIC HEALTH OF
COMMUNICATING
COLLABORATIVE

**A Quick Guide to Public
Health Misinformation**

Click below to read
NACCHO's preparedness brief:



**Supporting Local Health Departments in
World Cup Preparedness**



National Operations
Center of Excellence:

Preparing for the
FIFA World Cup 2026

To learn more, please click the link below:

[City of Atlanta Highlights Comprehensive
Preparations for FIFA World Cup 2026](#)



From the desk of Sherwin Levinson



Atlanta's Cities Readiness Initiative
& FIFA World Cup 2026

With Atlanta hosting eight FIFA World Cup matches at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, local agencies are ramping up emergency preparedness efforts backed by over \$52 million in federal FEMA grants.

Key readiness efforts include:

- Integrated Command Center (ICC): Unites city officials, public safety, and emergency responders for real-time coordination across the city.
- Mass Casualty Drills: Atlanta Police, Fire, and Fulton County Board of Health have conducted large-scale drills at fan festival zones including Centennial Olympic Park.
- Airspace Security: Federal funds support Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems to secure the airspace during matches.
- Public Health Logistics: Mass dispensing plans are being updated to ensure rapid distribution of essential medical supplies if a public health emergency occurs.

FIFA Preparedness

Stay prepared year-round with free tools from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Click each link below for a quick list of activities to keep you and your family ready.

FIFA World Cup 2026™: Be Prepared and Stay Safe



This summer, the United States is hosting the largest most complex sporting event in U.S. history which will attract millions of fans from across the country and world. If you plan to attend events, take these steps to stay safe: <https://www.ready.gov/fifa-world-cup-2026>

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES Call 1-866-PUB-HLTH anytime, 24/7.

Heroes aren't born. They Volunteer!

Stronger Together:
MRC & Partners in Preparedness
COMMUNITY & CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

THANK
YOU



Your Kroger Plus Card can help support our programs at no cost to you. Go to [Community Rewards](#) to enroll your card in support of MRC GEM. After registering your Kroger Plus Card, search for MRC GEM (org. #JI419) and select us as your supported organization. Once you do, Kroger will donate a percentage of what you spend to MRC GEM.

Click each logo to learn more !



Support MRC GEM every time you shop. Donate spare change by automatically rounding up your orders to the nearest dollar at checkout. Go to [Walmart Spark Good](#) for more information and to enroll in the program.



"Empower our community's emergency preparedness—your donation today helps build a safer, more resilient tomorrow."

<https://mrcgem.com/donate>

We are pleased to recognize our valued donors
in these ways:

For a donation of \$ 1000 or more, the donor's name and logo will be displayed as a Principal Sponsor at all meetings as well as on the donor web page. Your donation will provide a weekend of in-depth training for 4 or more volunteers.

For a donation of \$ 500 – \$ 999, the donor's name and logo will be displayed as Sustaining Sponsor at one monthly meeting and on our donor web page. Your donation will provide a weekend of in-depth training for 2 – 4 volunteers.

Supporting (\$ 250 – \$ 499) and Preparedness (up to \$ 249) donors will be recognized on our donor web page. Your donation will help us provide regular monthly training sessions for our volunteers.

To verify us directly with the IRS, click the link below:
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Search for EIN 26-1280067.

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If you prefer to mail a check, please make it out to
"MRC GEM" and mail to:
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<https://www.paypal.com/fundraiser/charity/63682>

Stronger Together

MRC GEM (East Metro Health District Medical Reserve Corps, Inc.) is a Georgia non-profit corporation with IRS 501(c)(3) approval. Donations are tax-deductible as provided by the Federal and State tax codes.

Your gift, no matter how large or small, helps us make our community a safer place for all of us. Since we are an independent nonprofit with no paid staff, we depend entirely on the generosity of donors like you. Every penny you donate goes directly to fulfilling our mission.

You can donate cash directly and conveniently through the PayPal giving fund using your credit card or PayPal account. The full donation amount comes to us; PayPal charges no fee for this service.

If you have any questions about donating, please email us at
donations@mrcgem.com

We appreciate your interest and support.

Heroes aren't born. They Volunteer!

An All
VOLUNTEER
Organization

Visit our website to find out more about becoming a MRC GEM volunteer.
Become an MRC GEM HERO TODAY!

mrcgem.com/join



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