

*Fire Crisis – October 2007  
San Bernardino County Sheriff Medical Reserve Corps  
deployed to Evacuation Center at the National Orange  
Show Fairgrounds in San Bernardino, CA*



The San Bernardino County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), a medical volunteer unit created by the San Bernardino County Medical Society and housed within the County Sheriff's Volunteer Forces Unit was activated on October 22 by the Sheriff. The call-out was implemented by the Medical Society staff. Within two hours, 14 MRC volunteers were on the scene at the National Orange Show rendering care to hundreds of evacuees from the Grass Valley and slide fires. Fifty MRC volunteers assisted throughout the week, many working multiple shifts to provide round the clock coverage through October 28. This was the first disaster activation for the MRC. Volunteers evaluated and treated over 1000 evacuees. This effort played an important role in reducing the number of evacuees requiring evaluation and treatment in local emergency rooms, assisting evacuees through the alleviation of anxiety, pain and discomfort, and in some cases,



The MRC arrived at the Red Cross evacuee shelter at the National Orange Show with a van and trailer stocked with medical supplies and equipment necessary to provide medical care. MRC volunteers were quickly briefed on the operation and designated an area inside the shelter where they set up a "field" clinic and began attending to the medical needs of the evacuees in the shelter.

Evacuees had a range of medical problems; many with existing medical conditions left their homes without their medications, and were unable to locate either personal physician or pharmacy. Some had minor injuries sustained during evacuation, or had respiratory ailments related to the massive amount of smoke in the air. There were several pregnant evacuees, one in active labor, and several who needed evaluation. The needs varied from simple first aid to critical illness requiring ambulance transport to local hospitals.



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MRC volunteers worked side by side with the Red Cross and were assisted by the support of volunteers from Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, which sent a mobile respiratory care support unit staffed with respiratory therapists (“BreathMobile”). Within 24 hours donated medical supplies began arriving from numerous contributors, including ARMC, Kaiser Fontana, and Beaver Medical Clinic. A storage room was handy next to the “field clinic” and volunteers organized the distribution of the various items required to serve the evacuees, which included prescription and over-the-counter medications, wheelchairs, and bandages. Volunteers used donated mini-fridges to temporarily store medications and vaccines.



MRC volunteers were recognized for their participation at the field clinic at the Red Cross Shelter in October 2007. While all of the 55 volunteers who participated will receive certificates of appreciation, this group of 24 volunteers were officially recognized during the Mock Activation and Tabletop Drill Training on January 8, 2008.