

# Partnering to Develop and Train for Inclusive Emergency Preparedness and Response

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Partnerships between the University of Delaware's Center for Disabilities Studies, the Delaware Division of Public Health and the Delaware Medical Reserve Corps have enhanced the state's ability to integrate people with disabilities into emergency preparedness plans and exercises. Activities ensure that people with disabilities have emergency plans, first responders are prepared to assist them during an emergency, and emergency services are accessible and available in accordance with the law.

## Delaware Division of Public Health/Office of Preparedness

### Emergency Preparedness Planning Committee for People with Access, Functional, and Medical Needs (PWAFFMN)

- The Emergency Preparedness Planning Committee for People with Access, Functional, and Medical Needs (PWAFFMN) was established by the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) Office of Preparedness in the summer of 2013. Working with other agencies throughout the state, the Office of Preparedness is developing a plan for the varied and unique emergency preparedness needs of people with access, functional, and medical needs.
- Plan projects include: The Functional Information and Support Center (FISC), Language and Sign Language Interpreters, Pediatric Disaster Preparedness, and the Health Equity Preparedness Subcommittee. During public health emergency events, an at-risk population group supervisor assists the State Health Operations Center (SHOC) to address the needs of vulnerable populations.

### The Functional Information and Support Center (FISC)

- The Functional Information and Support Center (FISC) provides subject matter experts and support for vulnerable populations during a disaster with public health impact.
- FISC facilitates the connection to agencies that can meet the needs of PWAFFMN and fulfill a DEMA and SHOC routed request.



Exercise Planning Team

### Health Equity Preparedness Subcommittee

Partnering with the Center for Disabilities Studies to identify, develop and implement :

- Standards for accessible communication
- A mechanism for refilling prescriptions during an emergency
- Training for public health employees in assisting people with disabilities during an emergency.

## Center for Disabilities Studies, University of Delaware

### Personal Preparedness Planning/Workshops for People with Disabilities

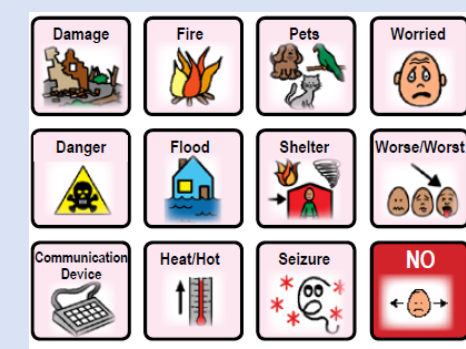
- The Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) conducts workshops for people with disabilities and their families on how to prepare a personal emergency plan and evacuation kit.
- CDS has a helpline that people with disabilities can call if they have questions about emergency preparedness.

### Technical Assistance

- CDS provides technical assistance regarding accommodations and supports for people with disabilities in emergency shelters and emergency training exercises.
- CDS recruits participants with disabilities to participate in emergency training exercises.
- CDS participates in DPH's People with Access and Functional Medical Needs (PWAFFMN) committee and the Functional Information and Support Center.

### Trainings:

- CDS conducted trainings for DMRC volunteers and DPH staff that addressed challenges that people with disabilities often face during an emergency and the types of assistance and supports that would be helpful.
- Workshops and trainings included information about federal laws and civil rights related to people with disabilities and their application during emergencies.
- Assistive technology devices were demonstrated that would be helpful to people with a variety of disabilities in emergency shelters or Point of Dispensing (POD) activities.



Examples of assistive technology: picture exchange communication sheet, various magnifiers, a speech amplification system with a neck loop, and a signature guide



- Trainings featured panels of self-advocates with a variety of disabilities who describe the unique challenges that each might face if they went to an emergency shelter and the types of supports and assistance that they would need to allow them to maintain their independence, dignity and health.

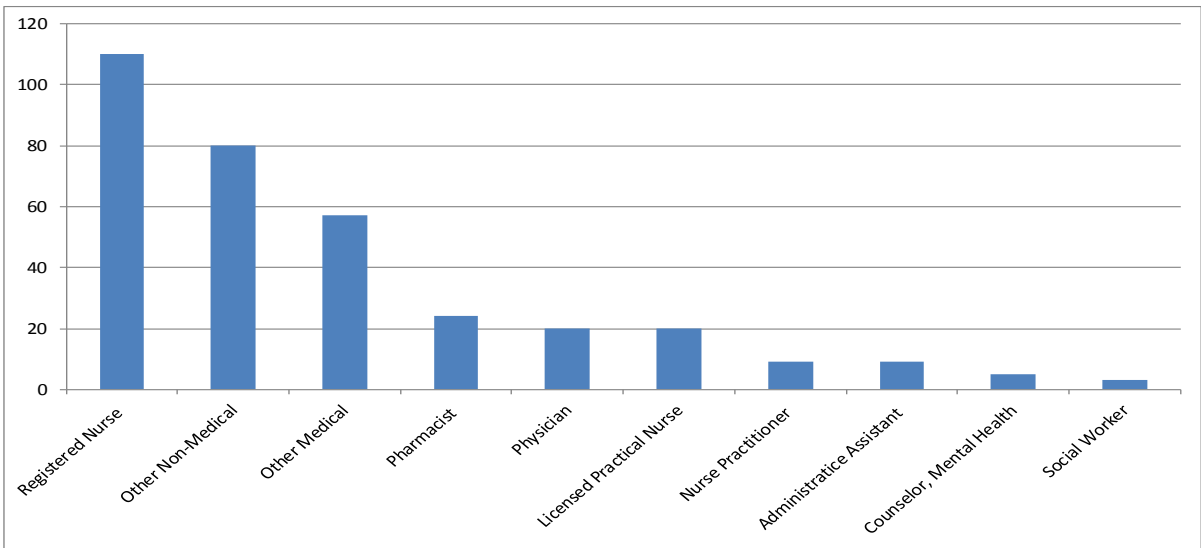
## Delaware Medical Reserve Corps (DMRC)

DMRC is a volunteer corps of diverse medical and non-medical professionals (i.e. nursing, health education, social work, etc.) that offers a replicable academic community partnership (UD Nursing – DPH) model to prepare and respond to public health emergencies.

It is activated by the State Health Operations Center. Volunteers replace or augment public health nurses and/or public health support personnel.

The DMRC consists of three county units and it provides the structure necessary to pre-identify, credential, train, and activate volunteers.

### DMRC Volunteer Backgrounds



CPR training;

### Emergency Response and Recovery

Shelters and PODs are open to the public, and people who come may have some form of functional and access needs and have legal rights to be there and to be helped.

The DMRC provides assistance with

- Shelters
- Points of Dispensing (PODs)/Flu Clinics
- Call Centers
- Population Monitoring

DMRC emergency roles may include

- Dispensing medications
- Triaging evacuees
- Performing administrative duties
- Other tasks as needed

### Training

In order to be proactive, trainings were conducted for public health nurses and DMRC volunteers to prepare them to appropriately assist people with functional and access needs during an emergency, or more specifically in a shelter or Point of Dispensing setting.