

## Medical Reserve Corps is working to expand its volunteer roster to 2000

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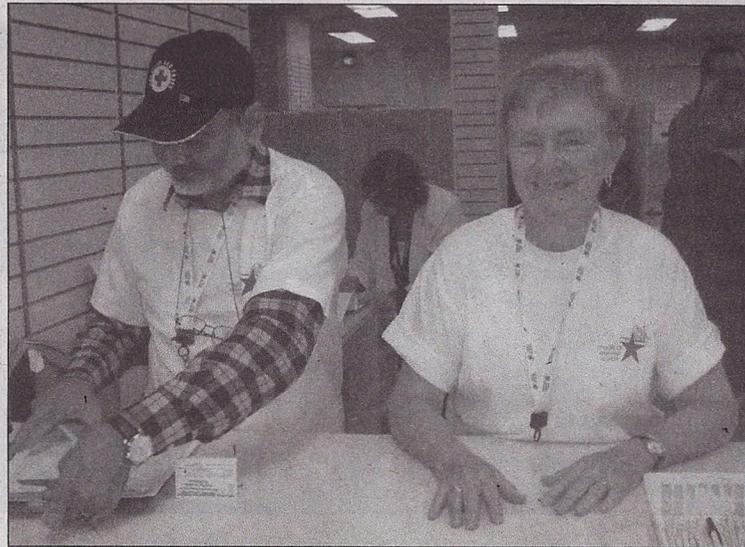
Bobbi Steneck wants to get 2,000 volunteers to sign up with Greater Prince William Medical Reserve Corps. Steneck, coordinator of the Prince William Health District, said the corps currently has about 320 volunteers.

Part of her job is to publicize the work of the Medical Reserve Corps, established by Tommy Thompson, secretary of Health and Human Services in July 2002. The Prince William chapter was established in 2006, she said.

Valerie Cyrus, a local volunteer in Prince William County, is a believer in volunteerism. Prince William, she said, "is a growing community." She believes everyone should find someplace in which to fit as a volunteer. "Volunteerism builds a better community," she added.

She volunteers "because I enjoy the medical field and as an [licensed practical nurse], this is where I fit." She encourages people to join the corps "because they can play a vital role in the health and education" of people in the county.

Although medical volunteers make up a large portion of the corps, Steneck stressed the need for a great many nonmedical per-



Courtesy photo

Medical Reserve Corps volunteers Shekhar Sharma, left, and Barbara Happ, a registered nurse, assist with reviewing forms at a Manassas Mall H1N1 clinic.

sonnel to meet its goal of being prepared for emergencies. Steneck said they have helped with seasonal flu vaccines, first-aid events and at local fairs. Its volunteers also supplement the medical capabilities of the health department.

"Our nonmedical component is vital; people don't realize that there are multiple layers of how that has to happen. Filling out forms, tracking and processing forms and interpreters are crucial; pretty much anyone over the age of 18 can help." Steneck explained the corps will accept those who are as young as 16 but "they must have a parent volunteer with them," she said.

families and neighborhoods," she noted.

The Medical Reserve Corps operates as part of the county health department.

Steneck said volunteers "also work closely with CERT [Community Emergency Response Team] and with Volunteer Prince William."

Steneck said the corps' volunteers need to be organized. "It is very difficult to organize volunteers in the midst of a crisis. It pays dividends to be prepared ahead of

time. You have to have people with the correct credentials and ensure that your agency is prepared." She said she wants "to have a well-trained volunteer cadre in place prior to any incident which may occur."

Volunteer Estelle Daniels said, "It's a great experience to live and work in the local area, making a difference in the lives of others." She said she's received training and gained certifications "in highly

skilled courses. I strongly encourage others to volunteer. It's a great way to give back to your community and show some support. I enjoy volunteering and doing what I can to assist others."

More information is available about the Medical Reserve Corps at [www.vamrc.org](http://www.vamrc.org). Steneck can answer specific questions by e-mail at [bobbi.steneck@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:bobbi.steneck@vdh.virginia.gov) or phone, at 703-792-7341.

Volunteers with experience in medicine and veterinary medicine and people who are bilingual and many others are encouraged to sign up to help. Steneck understands the Medical Reserve Corps lacks name recognition, because it's relatively new. However, she said, "when people learn about [the corps], they want to join once they understand what we do."

The corps offers training and provides resources for online and in-person training. "Emergency preparedness is key, and we encourage our volunteers to take [what they learn] back to their