





The Medical Reserve Corps is a national network of 300,000 regional healthcare provider volunteers in 800 Units. These community volunteers work to strengthen local public health, reduce vulnerability, and build capacity.



The Whatcom County MRC also holds first aid booths at local non-profit events, like Ski to Sea



The Whatcom County MRC doing COVID Vaccinations



MRC Background

MRC Implemented post 911 when medical and public health professionals, eager to volunteer in support of emergency relief activities, found that there was no organized approach to channel their efforts

2002

Whatcom Medical Reserve Corps disbanded

2010

Whatcom MRC was reinstated during the COVID Pandemic with 100+ volunteers. Vaccinations, testing. Post Pan river floods. Whatcom MRC records and volunteers managed by an AmeriCorps VISTA

2020



Collaborations

- Snohomish Medical Reserve Corps
- Skagit Medical Reserve Corps
- Washington State Medical Reserve Corps

In May 2023, Washington State passed HB 1452



Who We Are

The Whatcom County Street Medicine Team was established in November as a response to the need for accessible healthcare among those experiencing homelessness in Whatcom County.

2022

April an AmeriCorps VISTA was assigned to focus on WSM. Since June there have been consistent shifts and data collecting.

2023

The Whatcom Street Medicine Team is comprised of Whatcom Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers and derives its liability and indemnity coverage from the MRC. These volunteers work outside traditional healthcare settings to provide basic health care to our unsheltered neighbors by recognizing unique health concerns and eliminating barriers.





Purpose

According to Whatcom County [Point in Time Count](#), the population of individuals without shelter is on the rise.

Growing number of chronic illness and lower life expectancy

Higher cost of healthcare

In an effort to close this gap, the Street Medicine Team delivers onsite treatment as an opportunity to intervene before hospitalization or EMS

In turn, this intervention reduces the strain placed on the community's health care system.

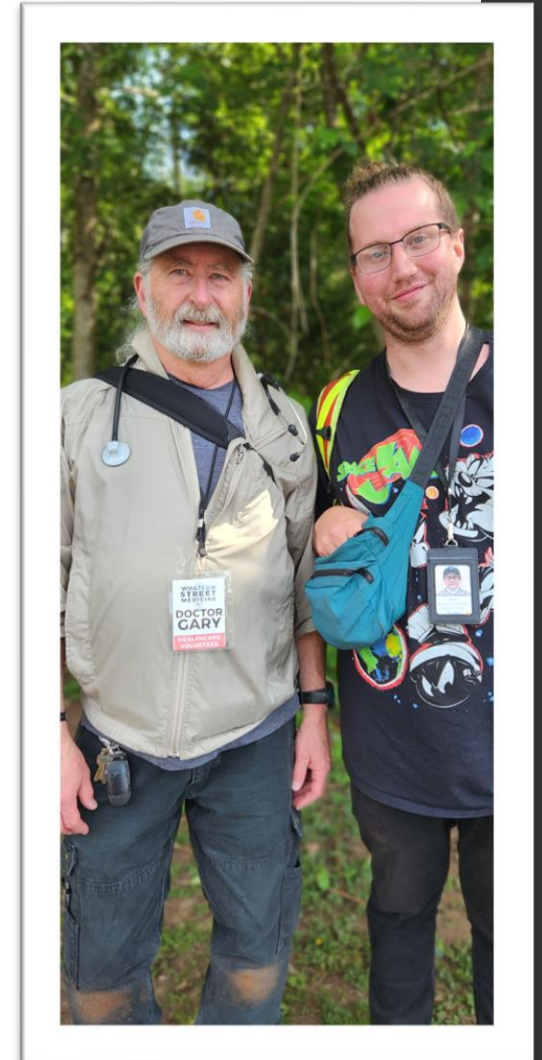




Success

- We have outlined the Street Medicine Policy and Procure Handbook
- We are finalizing a Whatcom County MRC Volunteer Handbook
- Built relationships and partnerships with area organizations
- We have established relationships within the community
- Some interactions are just medical attention, others also get followed up with HOT for services, some are just HOT interactions for service referrals.

“We define each shift’s success not by the number of people we gave medical attention to, but by the number of healthy interactions. With our partnership with HOT sometimes we give medical attention to 10 people in a shift but interact with 30+ in various other ways.” –Lindsey Blake –VISTA/Whatcom Street Medicine Scribe





Data

According to the Whatcom County PIT there was a roughly 27% increase in people counted, from 832 people counted in 2022 to 1,059 counted in January 2023.

“Two-thirds of the people surveyed reported having one or more additional challenges: mental illness, chronic substance use, chronic illness, or a physical or developmental disability. This likely represents an undercount of co-occurring illnesses because this data is self-reported and people may choose not to share these challenges with surveyors.” (*Whatcom County Health & Community Services Press Release*)

93 individuals medically served from June-December 2023
not including follow ups(repeats) or interactions

WSM Now has 9 Medical Volunteers

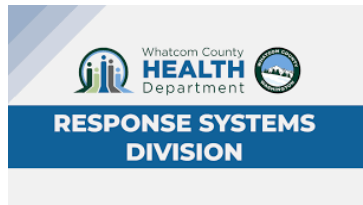


Partnerships



AmeriCorps VISTA

The Three-Year AmeriCorps VISTA program has provided the MRC and Street Medicine Program with a volunteer to manage the data collection and volunteers while building both programs as part of their service agreement.



Lacey McCarley, MN, FNP-BC Response Systems Special Programs Manager

Lacey's background with starting the Portland Street Medicine has been instrumental in building the framework of the program and training volunteers. She continues to guide us with answering questions and collaborates with patient care.



Opportunity Council - HOT Team

The Homeless Outreach Team has been our "navigator" and as part of the team they provide the outreach to community members that need resources beyond the MRC volunteers scope. This role has helped develop strategies and best practices.



Road2Home - Social Workers

The Road2Home Social Workers provide outreach services to the community members that need resources that are beyond the MRC volunteer scope. Without these roles there would be a gap in services provided to many of the people we serve.



Next 6 Months

Current focused areas to be successful and grow:

- Supplies –Basic Wound Care
- Training
- Unit Manager/Volunteer Coordinator
- Electronic Records Keeping
- Internal Structure

Dr. Gary Bachman, Whatcom Street Medicine Medical Director

References and Resources

Whatcom County Health & Community Services Press Release – Significant Rise in Homelessness June 2023

<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/CivicSend/ViewMessage/message/203844#:~:text=Changes%20from%202022%20to%202023,Basecamp%20or%20other%20specialized%20shelters.>

Whatcom County Coalition to End Homelessness

<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/75702/2023-PIT-Count-Report?bidId=>

Strategic Plan To End Homelessness in Whatcom County

<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/44575/Strategic-Plan-to-End-Homelessness-in-Whatcom-County-2019>

Street Medicine: Barrier Considerations for Healthcare Providers in the U.S.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10250111/>

Whatcom County MRC

<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/3740/Medical-Reserve-Corps>

National MRC

<https://aspr.hhs.gov/MRC/Pages/index.aspx>

House Bill 1452 State MRC

<https://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2023-24/Pdf/Bill%20Reports/House/1452-S2%20HBR%20FBR%202023.pdf?q=20230911115845>