

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) supported the Advanced Practice Centers (APC) from 1999 to 2012. The APC has been a credible source for free public health preparedness products that can be easily implemented by any local health department (LHD), as the products were created *by* LHDs *for* LHDs. Today, there is a legacy of more than 100 APC Products that build capacity, saving health departments time, resources and money by providing proven solutions and world class ideas that are ready for implementation.

## CASE STUDY

**The Mesa County Advanced Practice Center** is located in Grand Junction, CO. Its areas of focus include health informatics, environmental health, public health surveillance and epidemiology, medical surge, volunteer management, and quality improvement.

### EXEMPLARY APC PRODUCT

#### **Blueprint for the Use of Volunteers in Hospitals and Rural Medical Centers**

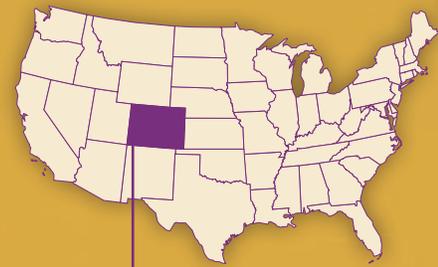
<http://apc.naccho.org/Products/APC20102192/Pages/Overview.aspx>

Most recently updated in 2011, the *Blueprint for the Use of Volunteers in Hospitals and Rural Medical Centers* was developed by the Mesa County APC to help hospitals and public health agencies integrate volunteer support into hospital inpatient, emergency department, and incident response operations through deployment of just-in-time training (JITT) and exercise curricula. With the help of the *Blueprint* toolkit, agencies learn how to foster relationships with partners; identify planning needs; and develop, exercise, and evaluate medical volunteer programs.

**Notable Feature:** All components of the *Blueprint* toolkit are consistent with guidance from the Incident Command System (ICS), the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and the Department of Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP).

#### **PHEP Capabilities Supported by this APC Product:**

- Capability 1: Community Preparedness
- Capability 2: Community Recovery
- Capability 3: Emergency Operations Coordination
- Capability 7: Mass Care
- Capability 10: Medical Surge
- Capability 15: Volunteer Management



### THE MESA COUNTY ADVANCED PRACTICE CENTER



# APC PRODUCT IN PRACTICE

In 2011, **South Dakota Department of Health** worked with the Mesa County APC to help the state's hospitals and other healthcare facilities prepare for the integration and use of volunteers by implementing the *Blueprint for the Use of Volunteers in Hospitals and Rural Medical Centers* APC product. Use of volunteers was a topic the state had not previously addressed, but they knew from past exercises that healthcare facilities in South Dakota were not prepared to use volunteers. The items in the *Blueprint* toolkit were presented to facilities throughout South Dakota across a five month period, after which a statewide exercise was held to test the new policies and procedures. The state-level implementation of the APC resources was led by LaJean Volmer, Training and Exercise Coordinator for the Public Health Preparedness and Response division of the South Dakota Department of Public Health which serves the state's 824,000 residents and 103 healthcare facilities.



## PROVIDED A HIGH QUALITY SOLUTION

"The *Blueprint for the Use of Volunteers in Hospitals and Rural Medical Centers* is exceptionally well done. It is complete, easy to follow, and set up to be adjusted to rural facilities as well as larger facilities," said Ms. Volmer.



## SAVED TIME

Ms. Volmer confirmed, "The *Blueprint* resources provided the templates and training for our state's healthcare facilities. This was a great time saver, as we had not yet begun to address the issue of using volunteers as medical surge staff."



## SAVED RESOURCES

"While our state's healthcare facilities were working with the turnkey APC templates and training materials, it freed up our office to research and provide information on the liability protections for deployed medical volunteers. Being able to focus on the local implications of this one critical piece, the liability piece, was a big reason the state was able to accomplish so much progress on this issue in such a short period of time," shared Ms. Volmer.



## INCLUDED CONSULTATIVE SUPPORT FROM APC STAFF

"APC staff from Mesa County provided multiple webinar trainings for healthcare facilities in our state. These trainings were valuable to the facilities implementing new procedures. The facilities and the state Department of Public Health learned lessons during the statewide exercise that would not have been possible without the training provided by Mesa County," said Ms. Volmer.



## ACHIEVED RESULTS

Ms. Volmer shared, "Thanks to the Mesa County APC staff and the *Blueprint for the Use of Volunteers* resources, healthcare facilities in the state of South Dakota are on the path toward having final policies and procedures in place for the use of medical volunteers – an important advancement for our state."