

# Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness

## SUCCESS STORY

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

### Private Sector Solution-Hunter Connected with Meta-Leadership and then Connected Hundreds

Contributor: Brooke Doerler

*“The Summit... was a win-win situation for all of us.”*

In 2009, Brooke Doerler was a Corporate Development Manager at inVentiv Health, a global services provider for the healthcare industry, working with large pharmaceutical manufacturers to address and improve pandemic preparedness. Her customers were contingency planners, risk managers, and human resource professionals at Fortune 500 companies in the healthcare sector. While conducting a series of national seminars that brought together corporations, public health agencies, nonprofits such as the American Red Cross, and hospitals to jointly discuss pandemic preparedness, Doerler learned of the Meta-Leadership Summits. She immediately saw the correlation between what she was doing and Meta-Leadership. “I saw the advantage to the larger community of sharing best practices to address emergency preparedness,” she said.

#### Meta-Leadership became the solution to a problem

“Everyone was working in a disjointed way. There was no forum where they could share and learn from what others were doing to address the very same issues,” she remembers. Seeing the potential benefit of the Meta-Leadership Summits to her customers, Doerler was instrumental in promoting the Summits in her service area. Doerler was surprised by the lack of awareness about preparedness among her Fortune 500 contacts so she worked to get them to the Meta-Leadership Summits. She felt that the private sector could greatly benefit from the Meta-Leadership concepts urging them to work collaboratively with non-profits and the public sector rather than keeping their preparedness plans separate for competitive reasons.

#### The value of the connections made with Meta-Leadership

Doerler was committed to this collaborative effort and to prove it, she attended six of the Summits, working diligently to help her customers in attendance make those necessary connections to public health professionals and other business leaders. Customers unable to attend would benefit from Doerler’s attendance because of the connections she would bring them. Doerler reports being thanked dozens of times by customers for these introductions. “The value of the Meta-Leadership Summit was about connecting a diverse group of business, nonprofit and public health leaders who were all working toward the same preparedness goals,” she said. “Rather than working in silos, we were able to rally a broad range of decision-makers to communicate, collaborate, and cooperate beyond their organizations to enhance their overall approach to emergency preparedness. It was a win-win situation for all of us.”

*The Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness empowered business, government and nonprofit leaders to act together in times of crisis. The five-year initiative connected 5,000 business, government and nonprofit leaders in 36 communities. For resources and more information about Meta-Leadership visit the [CDC Foundation Meta-Leadership Website](#).*



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
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### A Champion for Meta-Leadership in the Medical Reserve Corps Program

Contributor: Captain Robert Tosatto

*“The Summit encouraged participants to reach across different organizations and break down the silo approach.”*

Captain Robert Tosatto was first introduced to the concepts and principles of Meta-Leadership at a presentation made by one of the originators, Joe Henderson of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2005. When the opportunity arose in July 2009 to attend a Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness in the National Capital Region, Tosatto said it was a natural fit. Tosatto credits the Meta-Leadership Summit not only for reinforcing leadership concepts he had learned many years ago and encouraging networking with colleagues, but for also promoting an idea he had to create a network of Meta-Leaders within the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC).

#### Creating a model of Meta-Leadership within an organization

In the summer of 2009, which coincided with early cases of H1N1, Tosatto embarked on his mission to promote and model Meta-Leadership within the MRC. Tosatto explained that the Summit encouraged participants to “reach across different organizations and break down the silo approach. The Summit empowered individuals to take another’s message, share it, and be the connector and convener of that message even if it was not your own. During the H1N1 pandemic, we shared a lot of information and messaging from the CDC to help us promote flu prevention; it helped to open a door for better collaboration and improved cooperation” saysTosatto.

#### Promoting the lessons of Meta-Leadership at every opportunity

Tosatto has incorporated the principles of Meta-Leadership in many of the presentations he has made at regional and national MRC meetings, the Public Health Preparedness Summit and to other audiences such as the student members of Health Occupations Students of America – Future Health Professionals. Tosatto estimates that over the past two and one half years, he has made close to 25 presentations reaching more than 3,000 Medical Reserve Corps leaders, volunteers and other audience members interested in public health and emergency response. Tosatto credits Meta-Leadership for not only encouraging leaders to reach beyond their silos and chains of command, but for providing a framework to approach community resilience. The MRC and its role in community response is valuable, and “the framework by which communities can collaborate, form connections and build partnerships lies within Meta-Leadership.” Tosatto plans to remain a champion for Meta-Leadership by continuing to promote the concepts and principles in his presentations and disseminating information through the MRC’s listserv and other communications.

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