



# W MA HMCC Website Member Discussion Forums Guidebook

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October 2018

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## About the HMCC Website User Forums

### Forum Overview and Justification

The W MA Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition (HMCC) website (found online at [www.region1hmcc.org](http://www.region1hmcc.org)) hosts discussion forums for members to use as an information exchange around any and all topics related to public health and healthcare system emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. Forums are online discussion boards where participants can read and post comments, questions, documents, and web links from other stakeholders.

The HMCC website was significantly overhauled and re-launched in the summer of 2018, partly in response to member feedback that they wished for the HMCC website to host more resources for planning, information sharing, and virtual engagement. Our prior site did not utilize discussion forums, meaning this endeavor will be a shared learning experience for members and HMCC staff both! We hope that the forums will provide an additional modality for western MA health and medical stakeholders to communicate on a variety of topics and concerns.

While HMCC members are always encouraged to contact Mark, Tracy, or HMCC leadership<sup>1</sup> with thoughts, questions, or concerns, the online forums allow for a potentially more robust discussion, giving our membership the chance to participate on a timeframe of their choosing, or in response to specific topics, without having to drive from one end of western MA to the other for more meetings.

HMCC members are not expected nor required to use the website discussion forums - they are provided as an additional tool to foster communication, engagement, and information exchange.

### Forums, Topics, and Posts/Replies – A Guide for Beginners

The following section provides a brief overview of the basic elements of a discussion forum:

- **Forums**
- **Topics, and**
- **Posts/Replies**

Users familiar with message boards and online forums can skip this section and get right to “Getting Started”, page 6.

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<sup>1</sup> Contact information for all can be found at: <https://region1hmcc.org/about-hmcc/hmcc-staff-steering-committee-board/>

**Forums**, by definition, are places or mediums by which ideas and views on a particular issue can be exchanged. In this sense, the Member Discussion Forums page is the medium; that page hosts multiple forums, each of which serves as a container for a general idea/issue.

As of October 2018, the HMCC page hosts **4 distinct discussion forums: Training Needs, Open Forum, Exercise Planning and Implementation, and 2018-2019 Jurisdictional Risk Assessment.**

Forum	Topics	Posts
<b>2018-2019 Region 1 Jurisdictional Risk Assessment</b> This forum will ensure all Region 1 stakeholders have the means to participate in a virtual planning committee to shape and discuss this year's update to the regional Jurisdictional Risk Assessment between Full Coalition meetings.	2	2
<b>Exercise Planning and Implementation</b> Members can use this forum to call for templates, resources, or ideas from partners in the design and implementation of facility and community-based exercises.	0	0
<b>Open Forum</b> Unsure where your topic should go? That's OK - post it here in the general forum, and Mark will create new forums as needed! All we ask is that discussions stay germane to preparedness and response in the healthcare and emergency management world!	1	1
<b>Training Needs</b> A forum in which members can discuss all things training-related: call for ideas on possible training vendors or venues; seek opportunities to partner up to reduce training costs; promote independent study resources you found to be helpful. Other thoughts?	0	0

*This is what a site visitor will see when they navigate to member forums: a forum title, and a brief description of the type of content appropriate for that forum.*

For an example, let's work with the **2018-2019 Jurisdictional Risk Assessment (JRA)**, one of four current forums available on the webpage.

That forum currently holds **two topics**:

- **JRA Process**
- **JRA Data**

The “JRA Process” topic is where we will keep membership informed of and engaged with how we are going about conducting the JRA (timelines, strategies, engagement opportunities, et cetera). The “JRA Data” topic contains discussions around existing data we will explore, findings we wish to publish and get feedback on, etc. **(NOTE: any data specific to individual facilities, or data regarding specific disciplinary vulnerabilities, will never be posted online.)**

The screenshot shows the HMCC website interface. At the top left is the HMCC logo with the text 'Western MA Health & Medical Coordinating Coalition'. To the right is a navigation menu with 'Home', 'Resources', 'News', 'Event Calendar', 'About', and 'Join'. Below this is a brown header bar with the forum title '2018-2019 Region 1 Jurisdictional Risk Assessment' and a breadcrumb trail. A 'Subscribe' button is in the top right. The main content is a table of forum topics:

Topic	Voices	Posts
<a href="#">JRA Data</a> Started by: Mark Maloni	2	2
<a href="#">JRA Process</a> Started by: Mark Maloni	1	1

Below the table is a 'Create New Topic' button and a gray notification bar that reads: 'Your account has the ability to post unrestricted HTML content.'

*This is what a site visitor will see when they navigate to topics within a forum; the forum name in a tan bar at the top of the page, and a listing of current topics under that forum; note that above the gray bar towards the bottom is the link to “Create a New Topic” within a forum.*

Within any given topic, you will then find **Posts and Replies**. Posts are the actual conversation that is going on within the “containers” of topics and forums. Posts are where questions are posed, advice is sought, answers given materials shared and uploaded, etc. A Post is merely the opening post in a topic, all further conversation within that post thread are considered Replies.

JRA Process Home > Forums > 2018-2019 Region 1 Jurisdictional Risk Assessment > JRA Process

Author	Posts	Favorite   Subscribe
October 15, 2018 at 3:21 pm <span style="float: right;">EDIT   CLOSE   STICK (TO FRONT)   MERGE   TRASH   SPAM   REPLY   UNAPPROVE   REPORT #2222</span>		
Mark Maloni <i>Keymaster</i>	Thoughts on the overall JRA process as outlined in our October 2018 meeting.  Missed the meeting? That's OK! We have posted a PDF outlining our anticipated JRA process for this program year. Take a look and let us know your thoughts on the timeline, involved parties, etc.	
<b>Attachments:</b>  Region-1-JRA-Process-Proposed-October-2018.pdf [delete   detach]		

Reply To: JRA Process

Your account has the ability to post unrestricted HTML content.

**/ link b-quote eei img ul ol li code close tags**

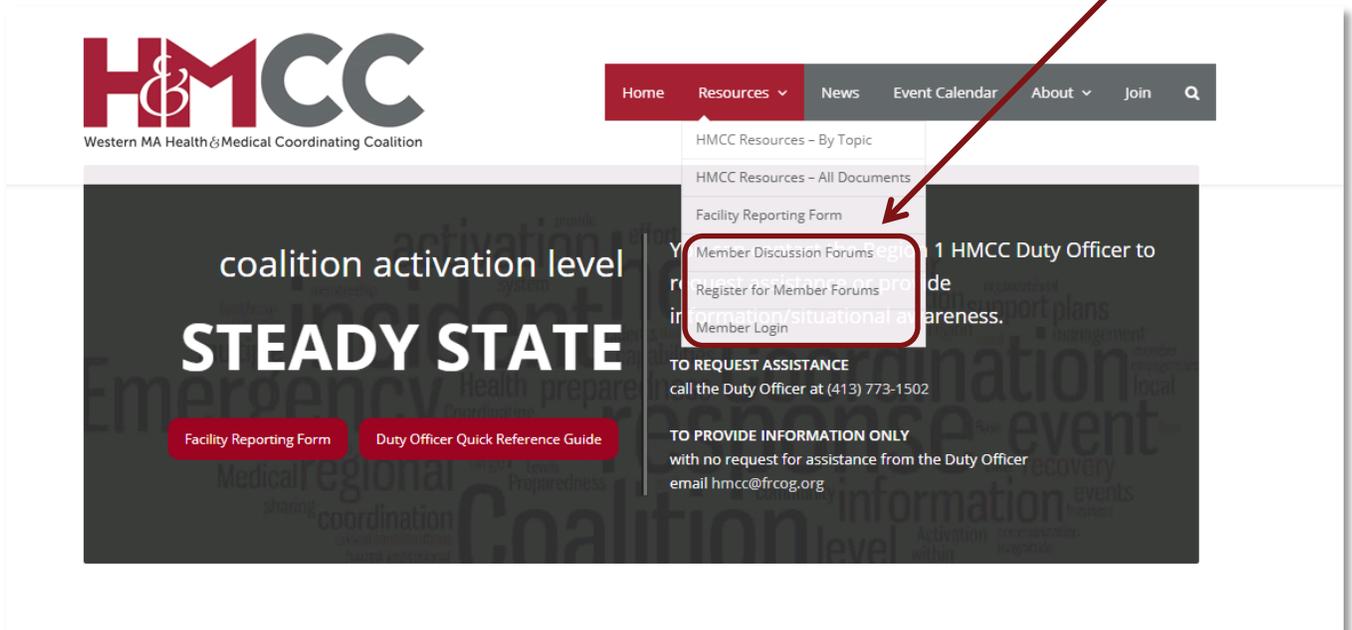
*This is what a site visitor will see when they navigate to posts within a topic: the topic name in a tan bar, and any posts and replies within it. This thread only has the single post as of this writing.*

That concludes our introduction and overview of discussion forums! The next section will walk through getting you setup to contribute to the forums.

## Getting Started

### Finding the Member Forums

Forums can be found under the “Resources” tab on our homepage<sup>2</sup>. That same tab holds the links to Register for forums by creating a secure password-protected member account (free and just a few mouse clicks). This tab also links to the Member Login page, allowing a registered user to post and upload to forums.



Any user can view forums without creating an account or logging in, as well as accessing links or attachments embedded within a post. An unregistered/not logged in user will not be able to post or reply, nor will they be able to subscribe to a topic to be notified as new discussion posts go up.

### Registering for Member Forums

Registering for Member forums is the process of creating a user profile to be able to login to the website. It is free, and automated, and secure; HMCC staff privileges will not know your password, though we can moderate forum activity, including removal of inappropriate posts, and suspension or removal of users who are consistently not using the forums appropriately. No other users have access to any information in your user profile that you do not want public.

<sup>2</sup> What's that address again? Its [www.region1hmcc.org](http://www.region1hmcc.org)

**From the home page, navigate to “Register for Member Forums”.** You will be asked to provide standard user profile setup information – a username, a password, your name, discipline, and phone.

The screenshot shows the registration form for the HMCC website. At the top left is the HMCC logo with the text "Western MA Health/Medical Coordinating Coalition". The top navigation bar includes "Home", "Resources", "News", "Event Calendar", "About", "Join", and a search icon. A message box at the top states: "Registering for this site is easy. Just fill in the fields below, and we'll get a new account set up for you in no time." The form is divided into two columns: "Account Details" and "Profile Details".

**Account Details:**

- Username (required):
- Email Address (required):
- Choose a Password (required):
- Confirm Password (required):

**Profile Details:**

- Full Name (required):   
To encourage constructive conversation via public accountability, these forums are not anonymous. You must provide your real full name, or your account will not be approved and you will not be able to participate.  
*This field may be seen by: Everyone* Change
- Professional Affiliation (required):   
What organization do you work for as a member of the Region 1 HMCC?  
*This field may be seen by: Everyone*
- Phone (required):   
This field is required, but it is hidden by default. This means the public can't see your phone number unless you change your profile settings to allow it to be displayed on the website.  
*This field may be seen by: Only Me* Change

At the bottom left of the form is a "Complete Sign Up" button. Red arrows point from the "Complete Sign Up" button to the "Full Name" and "Phone" fields, and from the "Full Name" field to the "Professional Affiliation" field.

Note that your full name and phone can be modified to different levels of privacy; the default is for any users to see your username on posts, but for no one to see your phone number.

We will work with our web developer to modify the **“Complete Sign Up”** button, which is currently not as visible as it could be. Once you submit this info, you will be asked to verify your sign up through a link sent to the email you provide during registration (note that the verification email sent to you may not be instantaneous; our testing showed it could take up to six hours to receive the automated email). Upon your verification through that email, your account will be live and ready to go.

## Logging on to the Site

The member login is found on the homepage in the Resources tab. If you forget your password, the login page will help you establish a new one. Note that this is an automated process and does not require HMCC staff.

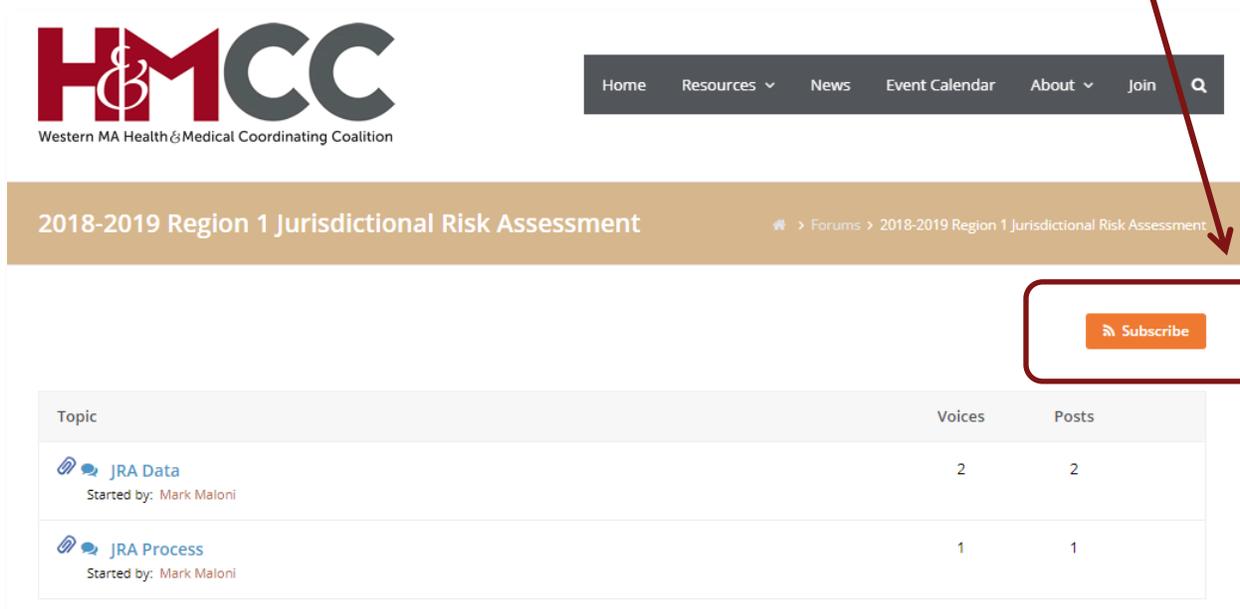
## Making the Most of Forums

### Posting

Members can engage with existing topics within forums, or create new topics within forums. Documents can be uploaded, and links can be shared. While we don't anticipate a great deal of moderation required to maintain professionalism and civility, HMCC staff will moderate forum conversations, and will also work to boost conversation and requests initiated by the membership.

### Subscriptions

Members can subscribe to a forum to be notified as the forum has activity. You will receive an email regardless if a member replies directly to a post of yours; but subscribing will key you in to all activity; this might be ideal for a new topic, or early on in this endeavor, when activity is likely to be low; if a topic is generating a great deal of activity, and you are being inundated with emails, you may wish to unsubscribe; members can subscribe and unsubscribe at will.



The screenshot shows the HMCC website interface. At the top left is the HMCC logo with the text "Western MA Health & Medical Coordinating Coalition". To the right is a navigation menu with links for Home, Resources, News, Event Calendar, About, and Join, along with a search icon. Below the navigation is a breadcrumb trail: "2018-2019 Region 1 Jurisdictional Risk Assessment" followed by "Forums > 2018-2019 Region 1 Jurisdictional Risk Assessment". A red arrow points from the top right towards a red-bordered box containing an orange "Subscribe" button. Below the button is a table of forum topics.

Topic	Voices	Posts
 <a href="#">JRA Data</a> Started by: Mark Maloni	2	2
 <a href="#">JRA Process</a> Started by: Mark Maloni	1	1

## Limits

- There is no limit to post length, or number of posts a user can make
- Topic Titles must be 80 character or less to ensure they can be read
- Attachments are limited to a file size of 10 MB – if a user needs to upload a document larger than that, contact HMCC staff for assistance.

## Privacy and Groups

**General forums** are viewable by anyone with an internet connection. The reality is we don't anticipate a great deal of traffic from anyone who is not an HMCC member, but it makes sense to bear in mind that anyone can see what is posted – usernames are solely required to post, not to view the posts of others. **Users should always be aware of privacy concerns regarding proprietary information regarding their facilities, security, plan sharing, contact information within documents, etc.**

With that said, **it is possible to have forums with greater privacy through the HMCC website.** Members who wish to utilize the forums for conversations not seen by the general public, or even by all members within the Coalition, can work with HMCC staff to create a **Private** or **Hidden forum**.

A **private forum** will show on the forums page to indicate that it exists, but the actual content within the forum, all posts, attachments, and participants, can not be seen. A member/user must request access to a private forum. That access would be granted by the site administrator (HMCC staff).

*A private forum is a way to ensure more privacy while still striving to generate awareness and/or interest; this might be a strategy for distinct disciplines to have a space for discussion items germane to their own concerns; for example, the HMCC website could host an "EMS" forum that is seen, but does not allow the general membership to access the content (neither viewing, nor posting), allowing EMS users to have a place to discuss clinical guidance, new protocols, etc., knowing that those conversations were being limited to EMS stakeholders.*

A **hidden forum** takes the privacy level even deeper. While a private forum displays to indicate that access could be requested, a hidden forum only shows up to members added by the site administrators; a general user would not even see the forum listed when they logged in.

A hidden forum is a way to ensure enhanced privacy from the larger HMCC membership, (current membership is approximately 850 individuals). Any projects or concerns that require collaborative input and greater privacy might benefit from a hidden forum (please note that HMCC staff can access hidden forums).

Members who wish to establish a private or hidden forum can contact Mark Maloni (contact information in the section below, and available from the HMCC website).

### **Troubleshooting**

The primary contact for all questions and concerns regarding the HMCC website and member forums is the HMCC Planning and Operations Coordinator, Mark Maloni. At any point if you are experiencing trouble, or have questions or concerns, please contact Mark directly.

**Mark Maloni**  
HMCC Planning and Operations Coordinator  
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[mmaloni@frcog.org](mailto:mmaloni@frcog.org)