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Healthcare Association

Hospital Preparedness Program

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has released a document which lays out the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) capabilities and functions for the new grant cycle beginning July 1, 2012. *The Healthcare Preparedness Capabilities: National Guidance for Healthcare System Preparedness* will assist hospitals and states identify gaps in preparedness, determine planning priorities, and sustain capabilities. The document is available at <http://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/hpp/reports/Documents/capabilities.pdf>

The capabilities, for the most part, are existing or redefined capabilities. What is new and helpful in this document are the concise descriptions of the functions, tasks and resources that detail and expand an understanding of how these capabilities can be better developed and sustained by hospitals. The capabilities are also, for the first time, aligned with the Public Emergency Health Preparedness (PHEP) grant's capabilities.

The document defines the following 8 capabilities for hospital preparedness:

- **Healthcare System Preparedness**
- **Healthcare System Recovery**
- **Emergency Operations Coordination**
- **Fatality Management**
- **Information Sharing**
- **Medical Surge**
- **Responder Safety and Health**
- **Volunteer Management**

Each **capability** includes a definition and is followed by the associated functions, tasks, and resource elements. The **functions** describe the critical elements that need to occur to achieve the capability. The **tasks** describe the steps that need to occur to complete the functions. The **resource elements** section lists the resources that may be needed to successfully perform a function and the associated tasks. The resources are categorized into three elements:

1. **Plans or planning:** Elements that should be included in existing operational plans, standard operating procedures, and/or emergency operations plans

2. **Skills and training:** The competencies and skills that may be necessary for personnel and teams to possess to competently deliver a capability
3. **Equipment and technology:** The equipment that may be needed to achieve the capability

Healthcare System Preparedness is the ability of a community's healthcare system to prepare, respond, and recover from incidents that have a public health and medical impact in the short and long term. The healthcare system role in community preparedness involves coordination with emergency management, public health, mental/behavioral health providers, community and faith-based partners, state, local, and territorial governments to do the following:

- Provide and sustain a tiered, scalable, and flexible approach to attain needed disaster response and recovery capabilities while not jeopardizing services to individuals in the community
- Provide timely monitoring and management of resources
- Coordinate the allocation of emergency medical care resources
- Provide timely and relevant information on the status of the incident and healthcare system to key stakeholders

Healthcare system preparedness is achieved through a continuous cycle of planning, organizing and equipping, training, exercises, evaluations and corrective actions.

Function 1: Develop, refine, or sustain Healthcare Coalitions

Function 2: Coordinate healthcare planning to prepare the healthcare system for a disaster

Function 3: Identify and prioritize essential healthcare assets and services

Function 4: Determine gaps in the healthcare preparedness and identify resources for mitigation of these gaps

Function 5: Coordinate training to assist healthcare responders to develop the necessary skills in order to respond

Function 6: Improve healthcare response capabilities through coordinated exercise and evaluation

Function 7: Coordinate with planning for at-risk individuals and those with special medical needs

Healthcare System Recovery involves the collaboration with Emergency Management and other community partners to develop efficient processes and advocate for the rebuilding of public health, medical, and mental/behavioral health systems to at least a level of functioning comparable to pre-incident levels and improved levels where possible. The focus is an effective and efficient return to normalcy or a new standard of normalcy for the provision of healthcare delivery to the community.

Function 1: Develop recovery processes for the healthcare delivery system
Function 2: Assist healthcare organizations to implement Continuity of Operations (COOP)

Emergency Operations Coordination regarding healthcare is the ability for healthcare organizations to engage with incident management at the Emergency Operations Center or with on-scene incident management during an incident to coordinate information and resource allocation for affected healthcare organizations. This is done through multi-agency coordination representing healthcare organizations or by integrating this coordination into plans and protocols that guide incident management to make the appropriate decisions. Coordination ensures that the healthcare organizations, incident management, and the public have relevant and timely information about the status and needs of the healthcare delivery system in the community. This enables healthcare organizations to coordinate their response with that of the community response and according to the framework of the NIMS.

Function 1: Healthcare organization multi-agency representation and coordination with emergency operations

Function 2: Assess and notify stakeholders of healthcare delivery status

Function 3: Support healthcare response efforts through coordination of resources

Function 4: Demobilize and evaluate healthcare operations

Fatality Management is the ability to coordinate with organizations (e.g., law enforcement, healthcare, emergency management, and medical examiner/coroner) to ensure the proper recovery, handling, identification, transportation, tracking, storage, and disposal of human remains and personal effects; certify cause of death; and facilitate access to mental/behavioral health services for family members, responders, and survivors of an incident. Coordination also includes the proper and culturally sensitive storage of human remains during periods of increased deaths at healthcare organizations during an incident.

Function 1: Coordinate surges of deaths and human remains at healthcare organizations with community fatality management operations

Function 2: Coordinate surges of concerned citizens with community agencies responsible for family assistance

Function 3: Mental/behavioral support at the healthcare organization level

Information Sharing is the ability to conduct multijurisdictional, multidisciplinary exchange of public health and medical related information and situational awareness between the healthcare system and local, state and federal, levels of government and the private sector. This includes the sharing of healthcare information through routine coordination with the Joint Information System for dissemination to the local, state, and Federal levels of government and the

community in preparation for and response to events or incidents of public health and medical significance.

Function 1: Provide healthcare situational awareness that contributes to the incident common operating picture

Function 2: Develop, refine, and sustain redundant, interoperable communication systems

Medical Surge capability is the ability to provide adequate medical evaluation and care during incidents that exceed the limits of the normal medical infrastructure within the community. This encompasses the ability of healthcare organizations to survive an all-hazards incident, and maintain or rapidly recover operations that were compromised.

Function 1: The Healthcare Coalition assists with the coordination of the healthcare organization response during incidents that require medical surge

Function 2: Coordinate integrated healthcare surge operations with pre-hospital Emergency Medical Services (EMS) operations

Function 3: Assist healthcare organizations with surge capacity and capability

Function 4: Develop Crisis Standards of Care guidance

Function 5: Provide assistance to healthcare organizations regarding evacuation and shelter in place operations

Responder Safety and Health capability describes the ability of healthcare organizations to protect the safety and health of healthcare workers from a variety of hazards during emergencies and disasters. This includes processes to equip, train, and provide other resources needed to ensure healthcare workers at the highest risk for adverse exposure, illness, and injury are adequately protected from all hazards during response and recovery operations.

Function 1: Assist healthcare organizations with additional pharmaceutical protection for healthcare workers

Function 2: Provide assistance to healthcare organizations with access to additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for healthcare workers during response

Volunteer Management is the ability to coordinate the identification, recruitment, registration, credential verification, training, engagement, and retention of volunteers to support healthcare organizations with the medical preparedness and response to incidents and events.

Function 1: Participate with volunteer planning processes to determine the need for volunteers in healthcare organizations

Function 2: Volunteer notification for healthcare response needs

Function 3: Organization and assignment of volunteers
Function 4: Coordinate the demobilization of volunteers

For additional information, please contact:

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