



Event Summary: Roundtable Discussion on *Diseases and Disasters*

Aging Populations and their Caregivers

Event Overview and Aims

In an effort to encourage disease-focused groups and community-facing organizations' engagement in preparedness initiatives and provide a forum to share their patient populations' unique needs and challenges with preparedness organizations, Healthcare Ready hosted a roundtable discussion on managing end stage renal disease and related kidney diseases during disasters. The event was designed to **serve as a listening and information gathering session** and **encourage partnerships and foster relationships**.

Discussion Themes and Takeways

- **Identifying Effective Messaging and Communication Media:** The growing role of technology in disaster information sharing and awareness has important implications for ensuring aging populations are prepared. Given that seniors are generally less likely to be as familiar, or even use, the internet as other demographics, planners and caregivers must be cognizant of how preparedness information is packaged and communicated. Attendees observed a wealth of preparedness information and resources are available online, but seniors may not be accessing it.
- **Conducting Effective Outreach:** A primary challenge for planners lays in engaging with seniors who may not have a caregiver or live close to family or loved ones. While attendees discussed various methods that are used to address this challenge, it continues to represent a significant hurdle for planners, particularly as more seniors tend to "age in place" and familiarity with technology is highly variable.
- **Uniform Terminology:** Attendees agreed that aging is frequently defined using different measures and therefore may be understood differently by different audiences, and that this reality is particularly important in the context of disaster preparedness. Measures discussed included age, presence of chronic conditions, access and functional needs, cognitive abilities and familiarity with technology, among others.

