



## **For Third Consecutive Year, Poll Shows Americans Fear Natural Disasters More than Terrorism, Global Pandemic or Cyber-Attack Combined**

*With Hurricane Season Underway, the Majority of Americans Are Concerned about the Possibility of a Disaster, Yet Many Remain Unprepared*

**WASHINGTON, D.C. – June 11, 2018:** Healthcare Ready, today released findings from a new national survey of 1,127 adults, which found for the third year in a row that the potential of a natural disaster, such as a hurricane, tornado, flood or wildfire, is the type of threat that causes most concern among Americans. Individual's concern about natural disasters (33 percent) continues to exceed worry about terrorist attacks (15 percent), cyber-attacks (eight percent), environmental disasters (five percent), or disease outbreaks (13 percent). The poll was conducted by international polling firm YouGov for Healthcare Ready, a Washington D.C.-based non-profit that works with the public and private sector to address healthcare resilience before, during and after disasters.

"These findings underscore the need to prioritize individual and community preparedness across the country in the face of threats from natural disasters, including the current hurricane season. Because we know that it's not if, but when, a disaster will strike," said Nicolette Louissaint, PhD, executive director of Healthcare Ready. "This annual poll provides insight that allows us to help the public and private health sectors better prepare and respond swiftly to a natural disaster, disease outbreak, or other emergency situations."

The survey was conducted at a time (May 11 - 13, 2018), when topics of natural disasters, including hurricanes and flooding had been resurfacing in the news. Among the survey's findings:

- **Only 35 percent of** Americans could list all their prescription details including dosage if they had to evacuate their homes without their medications or medical supplies, down from 2017 (38 percent).
- **25 percent** of Americans reported they could only go two to three days without access to their medications or medical equipment before they began to experience negative health outcomes.
- **More than half of Americans** (53 percent) do not have any emergency preparation plans in place, yet 42 percent are concerned about an emergency happening.
- **Americans are almost equally divided in their belief that a disaster could impact them in the next five years**, with 51 percent perceiving it as it very or somewhat likely, and 49 percent believing it is not very or not at all likely.

"Given the tremendous devastation that Americans witnessed during last year's natural disasters, including destructive hurricanes and wildfires, it's increasingly important to understand how we as country view and prioritize preparedness," continued Dr. Louissaint.

If someone has a serious health condition that needs regular treatments or critical medications, having an emergency plan to ensure a continuum of care can be life-saving. This survey data highlights that many Americans may not be prioritizing preparedness, leaving them vulnerable to negative outcomes during a catastrophic event. “We will continue to survey Americans because we believe that it is important for first responders, emergency managers, and the healthcare community to be aware of these trends,” Dr. Louissaint said upon reflection of the data.

One of the most striking findings in the poll was in response to the question about funding for the agencies responsible for preparing a community for natural disasters or disease outbreaks. Only 32 percent of Americans feel the federal government has enough funding to prepare communities for disasters and aid in disaster recovery, which is down from previous years. Even fewer, 30 percent, think that states are sufficiently funded.

“All levels of government must be involved for a swift and effective response and have to be sufficiently resourced in order to do so. Local and federal officials must also work with communities before disaster strikes to help them prepare and ultimately recover from a disaster,” said Dr. Louissaint.

There are small things people can do now, to help prepare for an extreme weather or disaster situation:

- Keep a written list of prescriptions, including dosage information, in a safe space. Healthcare Ready has a free printable card at [www.healthcareready.org/rx-on-the-run](http://www.healthcareready.org/rx-on-the-run).
- Prepare an emergency kit with food, water, flashlights, batteries, blankets, clothing and medical supplies for either sheltering-in-place or if you must evacuate.
- Map out the location of local hospitals, urgent care clinics and pharmacies.
- Discuss evacuation plans, meeting points, and support for family members and neighbors who may need extra help.
- Talking to your healthcare provider about specific preparedness actions you should take to manage health conditions (including chronic conditions) during a disaster.

“Disasters can be unpredictable and cause widespread destruction across communities, so it is essential individuals do their part and prepare as much as possible. At the same time, Healthcare Ready will prepare in collaboration with as many parties as possible. Solidifying a preparedness and response plan from the public and private sectors ahead of a disaster will help ensure communities are able to withstand destruction and even build back stronger,” concluded Dr. Louissaint.

Now in its third year, Healthcare Ready’s survey continues to provide useful insights about what Americans fear most and how prepared they feel for a natural disaster or emergency. As the facilitator of public and private sector collaboration, Healthcare Ready is prepared to address these issues and provide resources to fill gaps in preparedness and concerns shared in the survey.

For more information on the survey and to view the full results please visit <https://www.healthcareready.org/programs/community-preparedness>

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**About Healthcare Ready**

Healthcare Ready helps to strengthen healthcare through public private collaboration and addressing pressing issues before, during, and after disasters and disease outbreaks. As the convener of industry and government, Healthcare Ready safeguards patient health by providing solutions to critical problems and identifying best practices for healthcare preparedness and response.

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**About the YouGov survey**

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1,127 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 11th – 13th May 2018. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all US adults (aged 18+).