



Event Summary: Roundtable Discussion on Pharmacy and Emergency Preparedness

Event Overview and Aims

The roundtable discussion was designed to bring public officials and retail and community pharmacy owners and operators, payers, healthcare preparedness experts and other pharmacy stakeholders together to review challenges associated with ensuring access to medicines during and emergency and building health resilience year-round. Discussion was framed to identify opportunities for innovation and share best practices. The event was additionally designed to inform Healthcare Ready's [Resilient and Ready: Healthcare's Impact in Emergency Preparedness](#) report.

The event was designed to **serve as a listening and information sharing session and encourage partnerships and foster relationships.**

Discussion Themes and Takeaways

- **Communication:** The group agreed that communication across the sector during emergency situations is critical to a successful response. Having communication systems and relationships with private, non-profit, and governmental organizations in place before a disaster was also highlighted as an important part of emergency preparedness. Communication was also referenced in relation to how information about resources and systems is relayed to those in disaster areas, and how that could be executed more effectively.
- **Coordination:** The group cited coordination as a central challenge that we are working to make progress on. It is true that there are many organizations that are addressing the same issue; the group addressed a need for a more centralized network for situational awareness and to promote effective coordination among entities. As of now there are gaps in communication and coordination among organizations within the pharmacy and emergency preparedness sector.
- **Continual Challenges:** Two of the most pressing were controlled substances and the uninsured and the obstacles that these present during an emergency situation. With the opioid crisis that we are facing, the group conferred that more guidance and clarity was needed on the subject. Regulations on prescription refill and the emergency prescription assistance program vary among states which poses a challenge for national organizations. The group agreed that these challenges require further discussion and coordination.

