

Lessons Learned from Previous Disasters and Outbreaks

With experience activating for more than **60 disasters and infectious disease outbreaks since 2006**, it is clear that many similar challenges occur during a response.

The following policies will improve the ability for both public and private sectors to strengthen communities' resilience and protect access to healthcare during a crisis.



PROVIDER AUTHORITIES

During disasters, it is important to have an “all hands on deck” approach, which means giving medical providers from in-state and neighboring states the ability to practice and provide medical staffing. Emergency waivers and other tools can be used to ensure that providers are able to practice to treat patients, especially those with chronic diseases.

For patients, expanded provider authority could result in more medical professionals treating patients in shelters, clinics and other healthcare facilities. More trained professionals on site can ensure that there are no major lapses in healthcare for patients with chronic diseases and other illnesses, which may require continued treatment during an emergency.

HCR POLICY POSITION

Use CMS public health emergency waivers to ensure access to healthcare for displaced vulnerable citizens.

Appropriate use of HIPAA waivers to assist with information sharing.

Increased use of state provider license waivers to assist with license portability across state lines.



ROLE OF THE PHARMACIST

Pharmacists work in communities and often interact with patients more frequently than their primary care physicians. During disasters, well-trained pharmacists can fill a critical gap if there is a provider shortage, if they are permitted to dispense medication and perform diagnostic tests. We encourage the use of collaborative practice agreements as a tool to enable pharmacists to contribute to the public health response to an event.

Increased use of collaborative practice agreements in times of disaster and infectious disease outbreaks to ensure pharmacists have the appropriate authority to perform diagnostic tests and dispense medication.

References

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