Foundational Strategies for Emergency Preparedness within Health Centers Webinar

Thursday, April 18th, 2024
1:00-2:00pm Eastern | 10:00-11:00am Pacific

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Objectives

- Understand the purpose of implementing an emergency preparedness program at your health center

- Gain foundational knowledge on best practices for preparing for emergencies and environmental impacts on health

- Review how to begin developing an Emergency Preparedness Committee and Emergency Preparedness Plan

Polls:

- How familiar are you with emergency preparedness?

  – Very familiar

  – Somewhat familiar

  – Not familiar at all

- Does your organization currently have a formal emergency preparedness plan in place?

  – Yes

  – No

  – Unsure

Foundations of Emergency Preparedness

What is Emergency Preparedness?

- Preparedness is defined as:

  "A continuous cycle of planning, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating, and taking corrective action in an effort to ensure effective coordination during incident response."

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (2022, June 28). Plan and Prepare for Disasters. Retrieved from https://www.dhs.gov/plan-and-prepare-disasters

Principles of Emergency Management

Recovery: Activities that occur following a response to a disaster that are designed to help an organization and community return to a pre-disaster level of function.

Mitigation: Pre-event planning and actions which aims to lessen the effects of potential disaster.

Response: Responding to emergencies involves taking immediate actions to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs in the face of immediate and short-term effects.

Preparedness: Preparing ahead for emergencies by engaging with the community to strengthen readiness and ensure a thorough and effective response.

Recovery

Mitigation

Response

Preparedness

Key Reasons for Prioritizing Emergency Preparedness

➢Timely, coordinated reactions to various events

➢Site-specific plans based on roles, responsibilities, and training levels

➢Integration of external resources for comprehensive responses

➢Ensuring safety for patients, visitors, and staff during emergencies

➢Rapid restoration of essential services and property protection

➢Meeting requirements for a prepared healthcare facility

Understanding Potential Threats

Defining a Disaster

In the healthcare setting, a disaster is any emergency event which overwhelms or threatens to overwhelm the routine capabilities of the health center.

Emergencies in Health Center Context

Health centers face a wide range of emergencies that can disrupt normal operations and affect patient care.

Natural Disasters	Public Health Crises	Human-made Emergencies	Infrastructure Failures
Hurricanes	Pandemics	Power Outages	Water Supply Interruption
Earthquakes	Disease Outbreaks	Chemical Spills	Gas or Electrical System Malfunction
Wildfires	Biological Attack	Acts of Violence	Building Structural Issues

Recent Emergency Examples

Wildfires - Hawaii
(Aug 8, 2023 – Aug 11, 2023)

Typhoon Mawar - Guam
(May 19, 2023 – Jun 1, 2023)

Hurricane Idalia – Florida
(Aug 27, 2023 – Aug 30, 2023)

https://www.cms.gov/about-cms/what-we-do/emergency-response/current-emergencies

Hazard Vulnerability Analysis (HVA) Tool

HAZARD AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

DATE:_____2021-2022_____

LOCATION:_____

NATURALLY OCCURRING EVENTS

EVENT	SEVERITY = (MAGNITUDE - MITIGATION)							RISK
	PROBABILITY	HUMAN IMPACT	PROPERTY IMPACT	BUSINESS IMPACT	PREPARED-NESS	INTERNAL RESPONSE	EXTERNAL RESPONSE	
	Likelihood this will occur	Possibility of death or injury	Physical losses and damages	Interuption of services	Preplanning	Time, effectivness, resouces	Community/ Mutual Aid staff and supplies	Relative threat*
SCORE	0 = N/A 1 = Low 2 = Moderate 3 = High	0 = N/A 1 = Low 2 = Moderate 3 = High	0 = N/A 1 = Low 2 = Moderate 3 = High	0 = N/A 1 = Low 2 = Moderate 3 = High	0 = N/A 1 = High 2 = Moderate 3 = Low or none	0 = N/A 1 = High 2 = Moderate 3 = Low or none	0 = N/A 1 = High 2 = Moderate 3 = Low or none	0 - 100%
Hurricane	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	15%
Tornado	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	19%
Severe Thunderstorm	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	33%
Snow Fall	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	26%
Blizzard	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	30%
Ice Storm	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	26%
Earthquake	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	15%
Temperature Extremes	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	15%
Drought	1	1	1	0	2	2	1	13%
Flood, External	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	37%
Epidemic	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	15%
AVERAGE SCORE	1.06	0.69	1.00	0.94	1.06	1.06	0.69	11%

Threat increases with percentage.

RISK = PROBABILITY * SEVERITY		
0.11	0.35	0.30

Building a Strong
Health Center

Best Practices for Preparing for Emergencies

➤ Implementing regular training programs to ensure all staff are well-prepared for various emergency scenarios

➤ Conducting drills and simulations to practice emergency response procedures

➤ Maintaining an updated and comprehensive inventory of emergency supplies and resources

➤ Establishing clear communication protocols within the health center and with external partners

➤ Ensure compliance with accreditation standards, such as those set by the Joint Commission, Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) , and other relevant entities

Page last reviewed: September 15, 2020, Content source: Division of Population Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Developing Strategic Plans for Building Healthier Communities

Collaboration with Local Community Organizations:

- Engage with schools for health education workshops and emergency drills.
- Collaborate with food banks to establish emergency food distribution networks and provide nutritional education.
- Work with housing nonprofits to conduct home safety checks and install safety equipment.
- Involve faith-based groups in organizing vaccination drives and health screenings.

Participation in Community Health Initiatives:

- Partner with EMS to conduct community-wide health promotion campaigns and provide support for emergency medical services.

Establishment of Partnerships with Educational Institutions:

- Collaborate with schools and universities to integrate emergency preparedness education into curricula and provide resources for training.

Development of Tailored Strategies:

- Conduct community health assessments to identify specific needs.
- Customize emergency response plans to address prevalent health concerns.

Key Considerations for Improving Health Outcomes

- Consider effects on schedules, transportation, schooling, employment, and potential language barriers with new providers.

- Ensure communication and response efforts reflect the needs and context of the community.

- Collaborate with agencies to address various patient needs during emergencies.

- Recognize and address community-specific nuances to better understand and meet unique needs.

- Establish partnership agreements (MOUs) with other agencies to ensure seamless care.

Emergency Committee Development and Emergency Preparedness Plan

Importance of Committees in Emergency Response

- Committees play a pivotal role in coordinating and executing effective emergency responses

- They should bring together various expertise, ensuring a comprehensive approach to preparedness and response

- Committees facilitate communication, decision-making, and resource allocation during emergencies

- Their proactive involvement enhances overall organizational readiness

Menti: Who on your staff is involved in emergency preparedness?

Menti.com – use code 89173638

Quick Guide on Developing an Emergency Preparedness Committee

Identify key stakeholders, including representatives from various departments and community partners (HR, IT, risk management, community engagement)

➡️

Include participants who are passionate or experienced in the work

➡️

Include varied viewpoints on the committee to address the unique needs of all stakeholders.

➡️

Meet regularly to discuss:

- Training opportunities
- Grant funding
- Incidents
- Accreditation
- Check in with National Hurricane Center www.nhc.noaa.gov

Components of an Effective Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP)

1. **Introduction** - Overview of the purpose and scope of the plan

2. **Plan Objectives** - Clear and concise statement of the plan's goals and intended outcomes

3. **All-Hazards Assessment** - Evaluation of potential threats, including natural, man-made, technological, and wartime impacts

4. **Chain of Command (Incident Command)** - Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for quick decision-making during emergencies

Components of an Effective
Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP)

5. **Communication Protocols** - Comprehensive strategies for internal and external communication

6. **Resource Management** - Detailed procedures for the allocation and utilization of critical resources, including medical supplies, personnel, and technology

7. **Training and Drills** - Regular training programs and scenario-based drills to ensure preparedness and responsiveness

8. **Appendix** - Supplementary materials, contact information, and additional resources

Case Study: Power Outage Response

What Happened:

- A health center experienced a sudden power outage during a regular workday, affecting the entire facility.

- The outage disrupted critical operations, including patient care, medical equipment functionality, and communication systems.

- Staff immediately mobilized to assess the situation and initiate emergency protocols to ensure the safety and well-being of patients and staff.

Mitigation

Backup Generator System

- Installed backup generators for critical operations
- Sustaining them for up to 72 hours
- Quarterly maintenance by certified technicians

Emergency Response Training

- Staff received biannual training on emergency response protocols including instructions on patient triage, medication management, and communication procedures
- Focus on handling situations during downtime procedures

Unforeseen Challenges During Outage

- Surge in patient volume exceeded projections
- Strains on available resources and personnel

Preparedness

Emergency Preparedness Plan

- Comprehensive plan accessible to all staff
- Outlines step-by-step procedures for various emergencies, including power outages

Quarterly Power Outage Drills

- Conducted to simulate power outage scenarios
- Allows staff to practice response procedures

Emergency Supplies

- Strategically placed throughout the facility
- Ensures immediate access to essential items such as flashlights, batteries, first aid kits, and emergency medical equipment

Response

Emergency Response Activation

- Designated emergency response teams promptly activated
- Staff transitioned to backup power sources
- Predetermined contingency plans initiated upon power outage detection

Patient-Centered Care Focus

- Patient care remained primary focus throughout response effort
- Medical personnel prioritized critical treatments and procedures
- Maintained calm and reassuring presence to alleviate patient concerns

Challenges During Response

- Delays in communication due to malfunctioning backup communication systems
- Shortages of certain medical supplies emerged
- Adaptive responses implemented to ensure continued delivery of care

Recovery

Power Restoration and Recovery Process

- Comprehensive recovery process initiated post-power restoration
- Thorough assessment of facility for damages and safety concerns
- Emergency supplies restocked
- Equipment meticulously inspected for future readiness

Debriefing Sessions for Emergency Response Improvement

- Conducted with staff members to identify lessons learned
- Areas for improvement in emergency response protocols identified
- Feedback collected to inform future training initiatives

Collaborative Discussions with Local Agencies

- Engaged in discussions with local utility providers and emergency management agencies
- Reviewed outage's root causes
- Explored strategies for preventing similar disruptions in the future

Ongoing Challenges During Recovery Phase

- Addressing supply chain disruptions
- Managing staff fatigue from extended shifts during outage

Case Study: Wrap-Up

Success Factors:

- Proactive installation of backup generators and regular maintenance.
- Ongoing staff training on emergency response protocols.
- Availability of emergency supply caches.
- Quick activation of emergency response teams and prioritization of patient care.

Barriers:

- Surge in patient volume exceeding initial projections.
- Delays in communication due to malfunctioning backup communication systems.
- Shortages of certain medical supplies.

Lessons Learned:

- Importance of regularly updating and testing emergency preparedness plans.
- Need for enhanced communication protocols during emergencies.
- Importance of flexible response strategies to adapt to unforeseen challenges.
- Value of collaboration with external stakeholders and utility providers to prevent future disruptions.

Summary

✓Align with regulations and accreditation standards

✓Clear communication within and outside the organization is vital

✓Ongoing training ensures staff readiness and plan improvement

✓Utilize technology for efficient emergency response

✓Continuously improve based on past emergencies

✓Build strong collaborations with local organizations and responders

Questions?

Wrap-Up

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Courses

- Please click here to register for valuable training opportunities, including free courses, and download certificates of completion.

- The series of course trainings cater to all levels, from beginner to expert.

Explore more resources!

National Learning Library:
Resources for Clinical Workforce Development

https://www.weitzmaninstitute.org/ncaresources

Health Center
Resource Clearinghouse

https://www.healthcenterinfo.org/

Health Center Safety and Man-Made Threats Resource Packet

Contact Information

For information on future webinars, activity sessions, and communities of practice: please reach out to nca@chc1.com or visit https://www.chc1.com/nca