

Real-time Awareness: Mapping Critical Healthcare Infrastructure Status During Emergencies

Situational Awareness

Protecting access to healthcare during disasters is one of the primary objectives of emergency planners and responders. A vital component of this is having awareness of the operating status of healthcare facilities; especially given the fact that healthcare infrastructure is often impacted by the same event that increases the demands on it. During an event, patients may have access to power and transportation, but need to know the status of healthcare facilities before they go out on the roads to seek care or services. Similarly, emergency managers, first receivers and first responders need to know the status of facilities in order to coordinate healthcare-related aspects of an emergency response.

Project Overview

For key stakeholders preparing for and responding to an event, having an understanding of what health care resources, facilities, and capabilities are available to patients is critical in informing decision-making and planning. Healthcare Ready is a non-profit dedicated to ensuring patient access to healthcare, including medicines, during times of disaster. This project seeks to produce a comprehensive operating picture of specific critical healthcare facilities outside of hospitals for responders and patients. The project will utilize an assessment of available technology and data. This project will identify how to: (a) automate state-of-the-art healthcare facility status information reporting with little to no reporting burden on facilities; (b) process status information using national data standards, and; (c) provide status information that is platform agnostic so it may be incorporated into existing government, private, or Healthcare Ready and partner systems.



Medics prepare a dialysis patient for transport (Source: FEMA)

Next Steps

The outputs of the project will equip emergency management stakeholders and healthcare facility owners and operators to set up and formalize mechanisms for sharing information identified in the technology assessment. The stakeholder engagement manual will assist facility owners and operators, emergency managers and infrastructure working groups in conducting outreach to additional facility owners and operators to participate in the project. The engagement manual will include draft template data sharing agreements for stakeholders to use. As Healthcare Ready has been approached by healthcare leaders from other countries about building such a tool, the organization will be able to provide these findings and assessments as a useful guide as work on similar tools in other countries commences.



To learn more about the Healthcare Ready project, contact Jay Robinson, DHS Program Manager, at jay.robinson@hq.dhs.gov or Ewell Balltrip, CEO, NIHS at eballtrip@thenihs.org

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