



STATE FACT SHEET EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN PENNSYLVANIA

When a disaster impacts a state, region, or community, the health care system plays a crucial first responder role. From large hospitals to smaller community health centers, these entities work with emergency professionals, law enforcement, and state and federal agencies to address immediate needs and to deal with longer term recovery. Disasters may include, but are not limited to:

- **Natural disasters** such as floods, blizzards, tornadoes, hurricanes
- **Mass casualty incidents** include multiple vehicle accidents, train accidents, active shooter incidents
- **Environmental accidents** such as chemical fires and spills
- **Acts of domestic and foreign terrorism**
- **Public health threats** such as the Ebola outbreak and flu pandemics



Often, health care and emergency personnel, as well as volunteers, are responding to life-threatening situations. They drill and train to make immediate situational assessments and practice critical decision-making to protect the public.

The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) Emergency Preparedness staff support Pennsylvania’s hospitals and health care facilities as well as regional health care coalitions’ preparedness activities as they train, prepare for, and respond to emergencies.

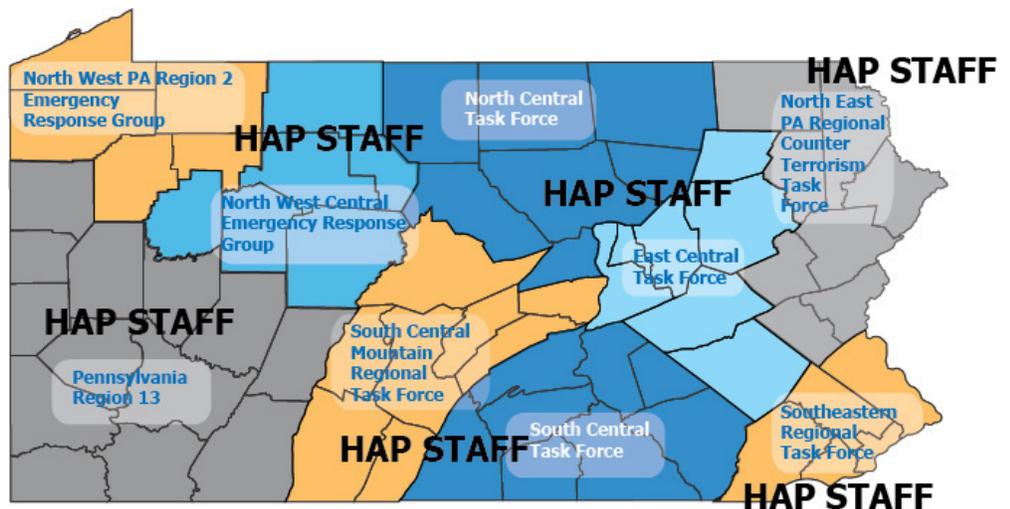
The Pennsylvania Health Care Coalition Preparedness Program

A partnership between The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) which began during 2012

The coalition is a PADOH-initiated partnership with HAP to refine, enhance, and test individual health care facility preparedness activities and response plans. The partnership is a regional approach to health care preparedness and works with the existing nine regional task force health and medical structures.

Recent Responses

- Hurricane Sandy, September 2012
- Franklin Regional High School knife attack, April 2014
- Mercy Fitzgerald active shooter incident, July 2014
- Ebola Virus Disease Crisis starting October 2014
- Amtrak Derailment, May 2015
- I-78 Snowstorm Crash, February 2016
- Planning and coordination for numerous special events including the Papal Visit; the Democratic National Convention, NFL Draft and Super Bowl Championship celebrations





The Program Partnership

- Develops, maintains, and tests regional and individual health care facility preparedness activities, training, and response plans
- Supports individual facility and regional hazard vulnerability assessments
- Guides implementation, training, and administration of the Knowledge Center—Pennsylvania’s statewide information sharing program that facilitates situational awareness and health care incident management and interfaces with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency’s Knowledge Center Incident Management System
- Develops and manages the Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement, which provides for assistance among health care organizations to support each other in times of supply, equipment, and/or staffing shortages and other situations threatening continuity of health care operations
- Provides staffing for health and medical operations support at the local, regional, or state level

The Partnership Going Forward

The latest federal guidance shifts focus from health care facility-based preparedness to health care community-based preparedness, and as a result, funding also is being shifted from individual health care facilities to regionally based Healthcare Coalitions (HCC). HCCs are a formal collaboration among health care organizations and public and private partners organized to prepare for, respond to, and recover from an emergency, mass casualty, or catastrophic event.

With this change in federal funding and guidance, the PADOH/HAP partnership has established updated activities and services for HAP that include:

- Providing support for the PADOH Bureau of Public Health Preparedness
- Assisting PADOH and facilities to implement the capabilities and functions prescribed under the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP)
- Providing operational support for HCCs
- Providing financial management for the HCCs
- Providing staff for health and medical operational support at the local, regional, or state level as needed

PARTNERS

The team works directly with regional coalition members to support “whole of community” preparedness and response, and includes:

- Hospitals
- Long-term care facilities
- Community health centers
- Ambulatory surgical centers
- Home care agencies
- Other health care facilities and agencies
- PADOH, county, and municipal public health
- Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) Staff
- Task force health care medical leadership
- Regional Emergency Medical Service Councils
- Partners in regional preparedness and response planning

HOW PENNSYLVANIA POLICYMAKERS CAN HELP

- Fund the Medicaid supplemental payment lines in the state general fund appropriations bill to ensure care in times of emergency and crisis:
 - Hospital trauma centers stand ready with trained specialists to treat patients who are the victims of mass violence or other disaster events
 - Burn centers employ highly skilled teams of medical specialists trained to care for burn victims
 - Critical access hospitals provide life-saving services 24-7 in Pennsylvania’s most rural communities
 - Hospital obstetric and neonatal units provide care for women and babies at risk due to the opioid crisis
- Ensure appropriate liability standards for first responders and health care workers who are active in times of disaster
- Protect volunteers who help during a disaster event from unreasonable liability litigation
- Pass a resolution to support federal HR 1876, which addresses disaster volunteers’ liability when crossing state lines
- Support SB 1019, which updates the Title 35 Emergency Management Section to modernize the emergency response network, which was last revised during 1996