Introduction to the Federal Disaster Response System

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By J. Marc Liu, MD, MPH, FAEMS
Section of EMS and Disaster Medicine
Medical College of Wisconsin

Conflicts of Interest

- No financial conflicts of interest

- Potential intellectual conflicts — Presenter has previously worked for several of the agencies mentioned in this presentation

The Obligatory Disclaimer

- The views and opinions expressed in this presentation are solely those of the author/presenter.

- The presenter does NOT represent the National Association of EMS Physicians, Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee County EMS, WI Dept. of Health Services, or the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Defense, and Veterans Affairs.

- Information may have changed since the development of this presentation.
Alphabet Soup

- ICS
- NTMS
- NRF
  - ESF
  - JFO
  - FCO

Alphabet Soup

- ICS = Incident Command System
- NTMS = National Incident Management System
- NRF = National Response Framework
  - ESF = Emergency Support Function
  - JFO = Joint Field Office
  - FCO = Federal Coordinating Officer

National Response Framework

- Basic outline of how federal government is involved in disaster response
- Defines federal roles/responsibilities
- Each annex has a designated coordinating agency
National Response Framework

- Emergency Support Functions
  - 15 operational areas
- Support Annexes
  - 8 functional/administrative areas (e.g. financial mgmt.)
- Incident Annexes
  - 7 types of incidents (e.g. biologic, cyber, terrorism)
  - Outlines specific assumptions, policies, actions

NRF Emergency Support Functions

- ESF 1 Transportation
- ESF 2 Communications
- ESF 3 Public Works and Engineering
- ESF 4 Firefighting
- ESF 5 Emergency Management
- ESF 6 Mass Care, Housing, and Human Services
- ESF 7 Resource Support
- ESF 8 Public Health and Medical Services
- ESF 9 Urban Search and Rescue
- ESF 10 Oil and Hazardous Materials Response
- ESF 11 Agriculture and Natural Resources
- ESF 12 Energy
- ESF 13 Public Safety and Security
- ESF 14 Long-term Community Recovery and Mitigation
- ESF 15 External Affairs
The Stafford Act

- Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (PL 101-707)
- Signed into law November 22, 1989
- Named for Senator Robert Stafford of Vermont (also student loan act)
- Amended the Disaster Relief Act of 1974 (PL 95-285)
- Amended in 2000, 2004

The Stafford Act

- Authorizes federal role in preparedness
- Authorizes federal government/agencies to act in disaster situations

Stafford Act Procedure

- State (governor) must request federal assistance
- FEMA regional Coordinator evaluates situation and state's request
- Recommendation forwarded through FEMA Administrator, DHS Secretary to President
- President declares a federal emergency
Stafford Act Procedure
- President then authorizes federal departments/agencies to provide assistance to state
  - Supplies and equipment
  - Personnel and technical assistance
  - Facilities
  - Grants and loans
- Also provisions for emergency use of Dept of Defense and VA resources

The Stafford Act

Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)
- Legal system of mutual aid between states
- Streamlines process for requesting aid
  - Affected state declares an emergency
  - Affected state then may request resources from another state that has an EMAC agreement
  - Other state sends resources
Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)

- Streamlines process for requesting aid
- Same legal process regardless of resource type
- Recognition of credentials/licensure across state lines

- Costs reimbursed by requesting state

- Liability/tort protection provided by requesting state (resource serves as agent of the state)

- Worker's comp/disability coverage provided by sending (resource's home) state

Main Agencies for Disaster Medical Response

- Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

- Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
  - Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR)

- Other federal departments assist as needed (under direction of FEMA and NCA)
Main Agencies for Disaster Medical Response

- Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Office of Health Affairs (OHA)

DHS Office of Health Affairs (OHA)

- DHS' principal authority for all medical and health issues
- "OHA provides medical, public health, and scientific expertise... to prepare for, respond to, and recover from all threats."

DHS Office of Health Affairs (OHA)

- Principal advisor to DHS and FEMA on medical and public health issues
- Workforce health protection
- Medical oversight
- Coordinates biological and chemical defense
What Is FEMA?
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Department of Homeland Security
- Coordinates federal resources in disaster response/recovery
- Federal Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Task Forces

FEMA/DHS and HHS Regions

Federal USAR Task Forces
- USAR = Urban Search and Rescue
- Confined space/collapsed structures
- Location, extraction, initial stabilization of victims
Federal USAR Task Forces

- Multidisciplinary team (Task Force)
  - Medical support of team and to treat patients found
  - Many TF’s have canine element
- Type I—70-person team for search, heavy rescue
- Type III—Smaller team for shorter/lighter search, rescue

Federal USAR Task Forces

- USAR TF’s are locally sponsored assets that are federalized when needed
  - When federalized, named by state and number
    (e.g., OH TF1 or CA TF4)
  - Different system than NDMS

Federal USAR Task Forces

US&R Response System Task Forces
Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

- Designated lead for Public Health and Medical (ESF-8) in the National Response Framework
- Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR)

What is NDMS?
- National Disaster Medical System
  - Federal system for medical response
  - HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR)
  - Office of Emergency Management (OEM)
What is NDMS?

- National Disaster Medical System
- Increase healthcare capacity when local healthcare system is overwhelmed
  - Field (disaster area) response
  - Medical evacuation
  - Definitive care

National Disaster Medical System

- Personnel from across the country
  - Medical personnel
  - Support/logistics personnel
  - Are intermittent federal employees

National Disaster Medical System

- Equipment and supplies to carry out mission
  - Medical
  - Veterinary
  - Mobile morgue
  - Command/communications units
NDMS Teams

- Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMATs)
- National Veterinary Response Teams (NVRTs)
- Disaster Mortuary Operations Response Teams (DMORTs)
- National Medical Response Team—Weapons of Mass Destruction (NMRT-WMD)
- International Medical/Surgical Response Teams (IMSURT)
- Logistical Response Assessment Teams (LRATs)
- Incident Response Coordination Teams (IRCTs)
NDMS is also a network of hospitals to provide definitive care
- Military hospitals
- VA hospitals
- Civilian/private hospitals
- Non-binding agreement to provide beds in emergency
- Approximately 80,000 beds throughout country
Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT)

**Deployable medical team**
- Provide care in the field
- Adverse conditions
- Self-sufficient operations for 72 hours
- 2-week rotations

**Team personnel**
- Recruited professionals from regular citizen
- Intermittent federal employees
- Protected by Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)
- Receive federal wage, liability protection when activated
- Employers required to hold job, health coverage
Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT)

- DMATs are multi-mission/multirole teams:
  - Acute/emergency care
  - Basic/primary care
  - Casualty collection point
  - Mobile staging/assessment
  - Evacuation staging point
  - Hospital, clinic, shelter augmentation
  - etc.
Other HHS Resources

- Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)
- Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESARVHP)
- U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps (USPHS)

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

- Focused on bolstering local/state assets
- Locally organized and recruited volunteers
- Medical/ allied health background
- Non-medical support
- Level of organization and capabilities vary greatly
- State coordinated
- Federal funding support (Office of Surgeon General)

Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESARVHP)

- Meant to improve local/state capacity
- Voluntary database of registered health professionals for use in emergencies
- Identity verification
- License and credential verification
- Employment verification
- Federal support (HHS ASPR)
- State coordinated system
U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps (USPHS)

- HHS Office of the Surgeon General
- One of the Uniformed Services of the United States

- Multidisciplinary commissioned officers
- Fill important public health/clinical positions throughout federal government
- Involved in all levels of federal disaster preparedness and response

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U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps (USPHS)

- Regional Incident Support Team (RIST)
- National Incident Support Team (NIST)
- Rapid Deployment Force (RDF)

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- Under HHS

- Role in disease/health surveillance, tracking, and awareness

- Up-to-date information to state/local public health agencies, clinicians, and the public
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Disaster/emergency response
- Emergency Operations Center
- Technical consultation
- Deployable investigations and containment teams
- Strategic National Stockpile

Department of Defense
- Stafford Act allows President to authorize use of DoD resources
  - “…emergency work … for the preservation of life and property”
  - “…includes clearance of debris and temporary restoration of essential public facilities and services.”

- DoD is also a partner in NDMS

DoD and Posse Comitatus
- Posse Comitatus Act (1878)
  - Prevents Dept of Defense and Armed Forces from being used to enforce laws

  - Does not restrict logistical support or humanitarian aid
  - Can act for emergency protection of life or property
  - Can act in specific extreme national emergencies (e.g., bioterror, nuclear threats, etc.)
Department of Veterans Affairs

→ VA includes Veterans Health Administration
→ VHA/VA Hospitals are authorized by Stafford Act to provide assistance in disasters/emergencies
→ VA is also a partner in NDMS

Department of Veterans Affairs

→ Disaster resources
  → Clinical response teams
  → Mobile equipment packet
  → Housing/food
  → Clinic
  → Pharmacy
  → Veterinary
  → Command/Control
→ VA is also a partner in NDMS

Other Important Legal Elements in Disasters

→ Homeland Security Act of 2002
  → Created U.S. Dept of Homeland Security
  → Moved FEMA into US DHS
→ Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5)
  → Defines Secretary of Homeland Security as lead federal official for domestic incidents
  → Establishes NDMS/ICS and NHP in standard frameworks
Other Important Legal Elements in Disasters

- Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8)
  - defines joint responsibility of local, state, and federal governments and private sector for preparedness
  - outlines core capabilities for disaster preparedness

- Title 32 United States Code
  - Allows federal-furnished National Guard assets to be used locally under state authority in certain situations

Other Important Legal Elements in Disasters

- Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA)
  - Authorized federal government (HHS) to develop plans and assets for biological emergencies
  - Expanded Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP)

Yet More Legal Elements

  - Addresses public health and medical incident
  - Disease surveillance, countmeasures distribution, mass casualty care, and community resilience

- Social Security Act
  - Allows Secretary of HHS to waive/modify HHS program requirements when an official federal disaster/state of emergency declared (such as Medicare, Medicaid)
High Yield Items (as best as my opinion)

Know ICS, NIMS, and NRF!
- General principles (e.g. unified command, unity of command, span of control)
- Command and general staff positions
- Supervisor titles at each level
- ESF-8 = Public Health and Medical Services

High Yield Items

Understand the Stafford Act process to activate federal disaster assistance
- Local →
- State (Governor) →
- Federal (through FEMA/DHS to President)

High Yield Items

Be familiar with basic roles/authorities of DHS, HHS, and DoD
- DHS = FEMA, overall federal coordination
- HHS = lead agency for public health/medical (ESF-8)
- DoD – able to provide logistic support in emergency
Additional Resources/References

- EMAC Website: http://www.emacclub.org/
- FEMA Website: http://www.fema.gov/
- http://www.fEMA.gov/35
- FBIS ASPR Website: http://www.aspr.gov/
- NEMS Website: http://www.nems.gov/Preparedness/strategies/nems/pages/default.aspx
- Hoehn E, Hoyt BG. The federal medical response to disasters. Emergency Medical Services - Clinical Practice and Systems Oversight/2nd Edition, Volume 1, Chapter 26