

Defining Medical Surge, Surge Capacity and Surge Response Capability for Catastrophic Events

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Abstract

A critical component of medical response to a catastrophic event is our surge response capability. Surge response capability is the ability of surge capacity to meet a surge in demand for medical services. Surge is defined as a sizable increase in demand for services compared to a baseline demand. Dimensions of surge include: (1) influx (volume rate); (2) event (type, scale and duration); and (3) resource demand (consumption and degradation). Medical surge capacity consists of four components: (1) structure (facilities); (2) staff; (3) supplies and equipment; and (4) systems (i.e. policies and procedures). While there is general agreement on the major components of medical surge capacity, the essential elements within each of these components has not been comprehensively detailed, especially for all hazard types. Our medical surge response capability will be influenced by surge and surge capacity as well as assets and systems that are external to the health care system but are important to medical surge capacity such as power, transportation, security. This talk will provide a conceptual framework of medical surge response capacity for all hazards that details the internal components and elements of surge and surge capacity as well as identifies the external factors that will influence our medical surge response capability for a catastrophic event.