

PREPARING FOR PANDEMIC INFLUENZA: POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO SURGE FROM INFORMAL RESPONSE NETWORKS

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BACKGROUND—This research is supported by the Dpt. of Homeland Security National Center for the Study of Preparedness and Catastrophic Events Response (PACER), established to address the technical, systematic, behavioral, and organizational challenges posed by various all-hazards threats. Informal Response Networks (IRN) consists of organizations and organizational linkages which normally exist for purposes other than contributing to disaster relief efforts. For this research, IRNs include community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and private businesses. IRN-capabilities and IRN-response effectiveness have not been quantified, but scientists generally agree that IRNs have the potential to significantly enhance overall surge capacity (Figures 1 & 2). This DHS-funded research will measure the disaster response capabilities and needs of willing IRNs, and formally integrate IRN-capabilities with Formal Response Networks (FRN), such as DHS, Public Health, Healthcare, EMA, Fire/Police, Red Cross, United Way, etc. Our research will also explore the potential impact of human perception and behavior on response effectiveness.



WORLD TRADE CENTER ATTACKS

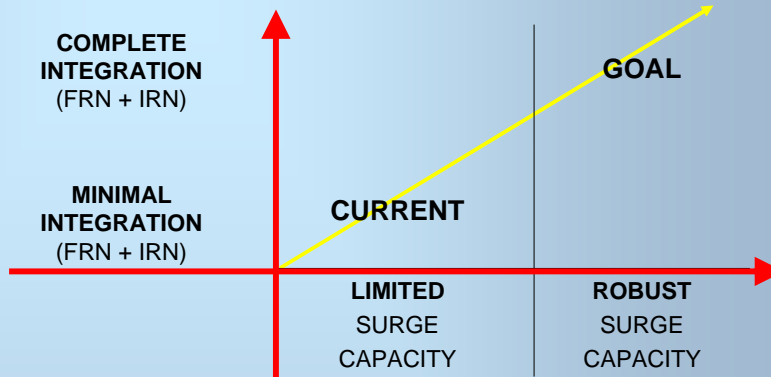
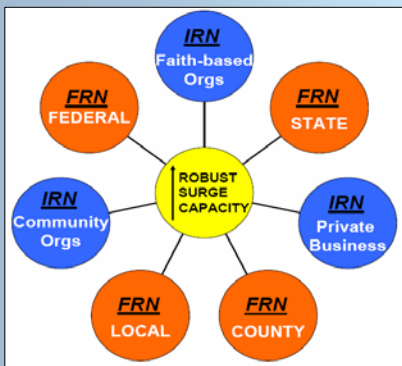
PURPOSE— Research outcomes will not only increase the nation's capacity to respond effectively to high consequence events, but formal and informal responders will be able to better anticipate human perceptions and behaviors capable of upsetting disaster response efforts. Furthermore, our research will strengthen awareness of IRN capabilities and formal integration of these resources to augment the National Response Plan, which will lead to increased hospital surge capacity.



OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING



HURRICANE KATRINA



FIGURES 1 & 2. Enhanced ability to manage surge events resulting from IRN + FRN integration.

METHODOLOGY—Survey research methods and focus group interviews will be used to assess the response capacity and training needs of IRNs. Standardized surveys distributed to persons affected by recent disasters (Oklahoma City bombing, World Trade Center attacks, Hurricane Katrina) will investigate the perceived value of relief services provided by IRNs. A national survey of the general public will explore trusted sources of risk communication, perceived value of relief services provided by FRNs, levels of individual disaster readiness, and issues related to response behavior.

REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK

- WHO's Checklist for P.I. Planning—collaborate with communities and institutions outside of public health (e.g. education, community organizations, transportation) to address existing weakness or absences in surge capacity. **(1)**
- Engaging public or private partners in P.I. preparedness and response planning can be extremely empowering for all parties involved. **(2)**
- Work together with other Faith-Based, Private Business, and Community Organizations in local areas and through networks (e.g. denominations, associations, etc) to help communities prepare for pandemic influenza. **(3-5)**

How could IRNs provide assistance to the public health / healthcare / EMS community & underserved populations during a pandemic outbreak ??

(1) World Health Organization. Avian influenza: assessing the pandemic threat. 2005. Available at: http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/
 (2) Revisiting public health preparedness: incorporating social justice principles into pandemic preparedness planning for influenza. *J. of Public Health Management & Practice*, July-August 2006.
 (3) Business Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services PandemicFlu.gov Website. <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/businesschecklist.pdf>. Accessed on 01/29/07.
 (4) Faith-Based & Community Organizations Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Checklist. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services PandemicFlu.gov Website. <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/faithbasedcommunitychecklist.pdf>. Accessed on 01/29/07.
 (5) Pandemic Influenza Planning Guidance for Medical Reserve Corps Units. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services PandemicFlu.gov Website.