Preparedness can reduce the impact of adverse events on the healthcare supply chain. Planning can also improve efficiency and help first responders address challenges.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANNING
KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE HEALTHCARE SUPPLY CHAIN

For healthcare providers and those who distribute medical-surgical products, preparedness initiatives must address a variety of scenarios from natural disasters and biological events to pandemic concerns. The checklists below encompass a range of issues such as employee safety, logistics, and business continuity.

Communication
- Establish points of contact inside your organization and with external partners
- Acquire radios, satellite phones
- Communicate your preparedness policies and operating procedures (internally and externally)
- Have multiple phone listings, e-mails, and points of contact for staff
- Set patient communication protocols for staff, patient, and suppliers
- Build relationships with emergency workers you will communicate and coordinate with during an event
- Discuss/exchange preparedness plans with business partners and others prior to an event
- Participate in industry, government, and customer planning committees. Obtain notes and minutes from such meetings if participation is not possible

Logistics
- Determine which disasters can impact your area including floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, etc.
- Plan for fuel, utility, and labor shortages
- Plan for a phased response to an event
- Note timing issues (routine computer checks or shut-downs) that may affect emergency preparations
- Conduct or participate in emergency drills
- Secure extra or alternate space for staging areas and operations
- Address security
- Assess transportation, shipping, and traffic issues
- Consider unconventional housing and transportation during an event (e.g. RVs)
- Plan for rapid, new customer/patient set-up

Business Planning (Internal)
- Establish a disaster response/exposure control plan
- Appoint a preparedness coordinator or team for relevant disaster scenarios
- Share information, post plans in public places, meet to discuss protocols
- Determine which employees are at risk
- Consider equipment, protective gear, and other precautions for infection control/disaster response
- Conduct worker training
- Consider legal, liability, and insurance issues
- At executive levels, identify top back-up personnel and share passwords, keys, data as appropriate
- Pursue telecommuting and alternate site work options for office staff and others
- Identify alternative staffing measures such as phased staffing/shifts
- Address compensation and benefits issues during and after an event
- Back up data in multiple formats and places

Business Planning (External)
- Establish remote customer/patient access
- Determine other medical facilities’ chains of command
- Assess and adapt to the altered resources of your supply chain partners
- Anticipate workflow interruptions across industries (power, sanitation, transportation)
- Enable transparency
- Identify key points of contact among state and local medical and/or emergency planning groups
Inventory and Distribution

- Increase inventory as appropriate
- Proactively address unit of measure issues
- Anticipate traditional and non-traditional needs and requests (e.g. non-med/surg products, batteries, etc.)
- Keep a customer order/sales history that can be used as a reference point during an event
- Know your ordering process and note any revisions for emergency scenarios
- Plan for the right personnel in the right place
- Determine how you can assist non-traditional customers such as civic groups, churches, shelters

Government Relations

- Keep current on pandemic, disaster, and anti-terrorism funding allocations
- Stay abreast of pre- and post-event protocol and guidelines for pandemics, disasters, etc.
- Learn government strategies to mitigate the impact of emergency events
- Assess your role in mitigation strategies
- Identify applicable scenario-specific emergency plans and guides developed by government agencies and departments
- Keep current on global actions and strategies such as international pandemic tracking and response plans

Additional Resources

Pandemics:
- U.S. Government at www Flu.gov
- Department of Health and Human Services at www.hhs.gov/nvpo
- World Health Organization (WHO) at www.who.int/influenza/preparedness/en
- Preparing for Pandemics and Pandemic Operation Guide at www.HIDA.org/Prepare
- Center for Disease Control at http://emergency.cdc.gov

Natural Disasters:
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at www.fema.gov
- National Weather Service/The National Hurricane Center at www.nws.noaa.gov or for local information visit www.nws.noaa.gov/stormready/contact.htm
- Dealing with Disasters–Hurricane Katrina and Beyond: Lessons Learned in Medical Distribution at www.HIDA.org/Prepare

Biological Events:
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS) at www.dhs.gov or www.ready.gov/biological-threats
- FDA at www.fda.gov/EmergencyPreparedness
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Emerging Infectious Diseases Journal, at wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid
- DHS, Chemical and Biological Defense Information Analysis Center under Homeland Defense and Security at https://www.hdiac.org/cbrn_defense

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