Emergency Preparedness: Igniting Physician Interest and Participation
Cheryl Starling, RN
Pandemic Influenza Program Director
California Department Of Public Health

Physician Role in Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

A critical need in preparing for the hospital response to emergencies is Physician Preparedness.

Some of the emergency response and recovery roles required of physicians require knowledge and skills that most do not possess.

Physician Role in Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

The good news:
- Most of the necessary skills and knowledge for emergency response are an extension of the physician’s day-to-day role
- Physicians are interested and want to learn-hospital emergency planners must ignite and harness that interest
Physician Role in Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

The challenges:
- Time!
- Emergency Response is NOT business as usual
- “Boxed in” (mentally) by specialty
- Apathy: it won’t happen here
- Lack of invitation into planning
- Not much in literature on the topic

Emergency Preparedness

American Medical Association:
- Preparedness:
  - ...provide medical expertise and work with others to develop public health policies
  - ...take appropriate advance measures to ensure their ability to provide medical services at the time of disaster, including the acquisition and maintenance of relevant knowledge.

AMA Code of Medical Ethics
Opinion 9.067, 2004

American College of Emergency Physicians
- Preparedness
  - ...emergency physicians should assume a primary role in medical aspects of disaster
    - Planning
    - Management
    - Patient care
  - ...emergency physicians should pursue training that will enable them to fulfill this responsibility

ACEP: Disaster Medical Services
October 2006
Emergency Preparedness
American College of Emergency Physicians

Preparedness

ACEP encourages physicians to:

- Assist institutions and community to prepare
- Continue to work in disaster situations
- Use all available methods to protect self, family, co-workers and patients from risk
- Work with institutional leaders to effectively communicate information to co-workers and the public
- Be prepared to assume the role of crisis triage officer to allocate scarce resources, when necessary

Response Mission

The mission of physicians during emergency response?

The provision and continuation of clinical services

Spark Interest and Participation

Harness the power:

- Formal leaders
- Assigned participants
- Volunteers
- Informal leaders
- Internal and External resources
The Basics

Spark interest by making it “real”
- Capitalize on current emergencies
  - Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Influenza
  - Wildfires
- Harness the specialty but don’t box it in
  - E.g., an Orthopedist can treat flu patients

The Basics

Teach to what they DON’T know, not to what they already know!

Capture with Topics that Interest the Physician

Basic emergency preparedness education is good, but...

- Introduce Interest-Sparking Concepts
  - Allocation of critical, scarce resources
  - Leadership role in decision-making
  - Role in command and management (ICS)
  - Expanding roles during response
  - Ethical decisions during disasters
  - Self and family preparedness
  - Integration of institution in community/public health response
Presentation is Everything!

Present education and information in creative and rewarding ways
- Presentations at medical staff meetings
  - Run scenarios - don't focus on didactic presentations
  - Participation is the key
- Invite leaders to key Emergency Preparedness meetings
  - Be meeting-selective to maximize time efficiency
  - Collaborate with medical societies to recruit physicians in emergency preparedness activities

Presentation is Everything!

- Offer CMEs for educational presentations and participation in exercises (planning)
  - Work with your CME provider/Education Department on requirements
- Schedule exercises when MDs can participate
  - They can't leave their offices during patient hours!
  - Ensure a "physician-track" or focus in exercises
  - Observers and evaluators

The Physician’s Critical Role

- Demonstrate the importance of physician participation in planning, preparedness, response, and recovery
  - The physician can be a victim of the emergency = be involved in preparing our institution and community!
  - Encourage involvement in community, state, national preparedness
    - Volunteer organizations
    - Medical Reserve Corps
    - Disaster Medical Assistance Teams
    - California Disaster Volunteers at www.healthcarevolunteers.ca.gov/
Provide Resources

Incident Command System

- Independent Study Courses:
  - www.training.fema.gov/IS/
  - www.calhospital.org/public/edu/nims.html

- Classroom courses
  - Hospital-based courses
  - Community courses

Emergency Training Resources

National Disaster Life Support Programs

- Core Disaster Life Support
  - Introduction to all-hazards preparedness for healthcare and emergency responders

- Basic Disaster Life Support
  - Review of all-hazards topics
  - Critical information on the healthcare professional's role

- Advanced Disaster Life Support
  - More advanced practicum course for trained BDLS providers

Round Table

What best practices have you used to harness physician participation in emergency preparedness and response?

What lessons learned / areas to avoid advice do you have?
Thank You

Cheryl Starling, RN
Pandemic Influenza Project Director
California Department of Public Health
Cheryl.starling@cdph.ca.gov
Phone: 510-374-8775