

HIMSS-COMCARE Emergency Responder & Health IT Partnership



To advance interoperability between the emergency response and healthcare stakeholders, this partnership will provide real world opportunities to implement the recent Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) drive to expand its electronic health record initiative to emergency medical response.

Embracing Health Information Technology to Enhance Emergency Response: Lessons Learned, Hurricane Katrina

*"...The lack of an interoperable data system... prevented medical personnel from obtaining information about patients, even if their facility had suffered no hurricane damage...including patient medical records, information needed to track missing children and adults, coordinate search and rescue operations, and verify eligibility for benefits... no continuous records were kept to identify and track patients or the treatment they received.... Often the identification-and-tracking system consisted of paper stapled to victims' bed sheets or taped to their bodies."**

Partnership Vision

- Facilitate consensus on requirements for a standards-based, integrated, interoperable patient information system;
- Promote a coordinated emergency medical response system across the continuum of care; and
- Save lives, time, and money.

Key Stakeholder Groups

Hospital and healthcare communities represented in the current healthcare IT system as well as EMS, 9-1-1, emergency management, public health, and victim services.

Federal Efforts - In Progress

In reaction to the *Federal Response to Katrina Lessons Learned* report, Recommendation 62, "...foster widespread use of interoperable electronic health (EHR) records systems, to achieve development and certification of systems for emergency responders within the next 12 months," an Emergency Responder Electronic Health Record (ER-EHR) use case was prioritized and developed. Its purpose is to support emergency and routine healthcare activities with the interoperability requirements currently being defined.

Additional Resources

HIMSS Emergency Response Task Force white paper. **Available at**
www.himss.org/Content/files/ambulatorydocs/FirstResponder_Final_5_30_07.pdf

The Future of Emergency Response: Need for Technology Enabled Process Transformation.
Available at <http://www.comcare.org/BriefingDocs.html>

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*Special Report of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, US Senate, Washington, DC, 2006. Available at http://hsgac.senate.gov/_files/Katrina/FullReport.pdf.