Volunteer Management
Topic Collection
8/30/2017
**Topic Collection: Volunteer Management**

During large-scale disasters or extended health emergencies, healthcare facilities may need to augment their teams (often with volunteers) to continue to provide patient care. Protocols defining when and how volunteers will be used; how they will be identified; how they will be credentialed and assigned; and how their work will be managed and evaluated must be developed as part of an organization’s emergency response plan. The resources in this Topic Collection include guidance and strategies, targeted legal information, and planning templates to assist healthcare facilities with successfully incorporating volunteers into their disaster management plans. In addition, some key resources for professionals responsible for the day-to-day management of a public health/healthcare volunteer program are included.

Please refer to the [Healthcare-Related Disaster Legal/Regulatory/Federal Policy Topic Collection](#) for additional legal resources.

Each resource in this Topic Collection is placed into one or more of the following categories (click on the category name to be taken directly to that set of resources). Resources marked with an asterisk (*) appear in more than one category.

**Must Reads**

- Education and Training
- Incorporating Volunteers into Healthcare Disaster Response
- Legal Issues and Volunteers
- Lessons Learned
- Plans, Tools, and Templates
- Volunteer Program Management
- Agencies and Organizations

**Must Reads**


This plan describes Arizona’s approach to coordinating the credentialing, verification, recruitment, activation, notification, deployment, movement, and demobilization of volunteers using its Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) program. The plan structure and issues considered may be helpful to healthcare facilities in the development of plans to manage disaster volunteers.

While not written specifically for the use of volunteer medical professionals, this document provides general guidance to support the creation of a Disaster Volunteer Plan for a healthcare facility.


This toolkit consists of a series of fact sheets and executive overviews focused on key concepts regarding emergency response volunteers, including types of volunteers; federal and state laws governing or affecting volunteers; and volunteer registration, licensing, credentialing, and privileging.


The aim of this guide is to provide an overview of volunteers and liability; a summary of the law and liability; list sources of liability protection (e.g., volunteer acts and Good Samaritan laws); and explain risk management as it relates to liability. Also included are checklists that can be tailored by volunteer organizations.


This slide-based presentation with bulleted text and helpful graphics describes different types of emergency declarations, notes differences between states, provides examples of liability issues during disasters, and discusses the federal- and state-level availability of liability and workers' compensation coverage for volunteers.


The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Training Plan is a suggested guide for training MRC Volunteers at the local level. It presents a “menu” of options to guide MRC Unit leaders and volunteers with trainings that align with the Competencies for Disaster Medicine and Public Health.

This 4-part course was developed to help Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Unit Leaders manage their MRC units. Volunteer Management-Part 1 discusses volunteer performance evaluation, including disciplinary action and dismissal, and may be helpful to healthcare facilities in the development of disaster volunteer management plans.


This article describes the Healthcare Facilities Partnership of South Central Pennsylvania and the effect of the coalition on enhancing surge capacity for optimization of access to hospital beds during mass casualty events over a 24-month evaluation period. Designating and training a coordinator for the state healthcare volunteer database contributed to a significant increase in volunteer registrations from among the participating hospitals.


This document provides guidelines, procedures, and policies to assist community clinics with incorporating volunteers into their disaster response plans. The document may also be used as a reference for developing a disaster volunteer plan for other healthcare settings.


This toolkit is a companion to The Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County’s Disaster Volunteer Utilization Plan: Guidance Document. Its content may be modified, as needed, to create planning tools for managing volunteers in the healthcare setting.


This course provides an overview of the functions of organization, notification, assembly, dispatch, and demobilization of volunteers in an emergency. Although created to support a jurisdictional public health agency's response to incidents of public health significance, the general principles of volunteer management presented in this course may be applicable to the development of a healthcare facility’s disaster volunteer plan.
This second module in a series on volunteer management includes information on identifying the types and numbers of volunteers needed for a response; working with external partners; and managing spontaneous volunteers. Although created to support a jurisdictional public health agency's response to incidents of public health significance, the general principles of volunteer management presented in this course may be applicable to the development of a healthcare facility’s disaster volunteer plan.

This third course in a series on volunteer management includes information on managing volunteer stress; tracking volunteers at an emergency site; evaluating volunteer performance; and demobilizing volunteers. Although created to support a jurisdictional public health agency's response to incidents of public health significance, the general principles of volunteer management presented in this course may be applicable to the development of a healthcare facility’s disaster volunteer plan.

This webpage describes laws and compacts related to volunteer liability, license reciprocity, scope of practice, and workers’ benefits. Information is searchable by profession, state, and status of emergency declaration.

This document defines 4 key functions for Volunteer Management (Coordinate volunteers; Notify volunteers; Organize, assemble, and dispatch volunteers; and Demobilize volunteers). Although written for public health departments, some of the tasks noted are also applicable to the development of healthcare facility volunteer plans.

This webpage describes the Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) program, which provides standards and guidelines to assist states with setting up standardized volunteer databases to support public health and medical response during disasters. ESAR-VHP registries allow volunteers' identities,
licenses, credentials, accreditations, and hospital privileges to be verified in advance of an emergency, facilitating more rapid deployment.

Western Mass Medical Reserve Corps. (2013). *Spontaneous Volunteer Management Plan Template*.

This plan template can be tailored by emergency planners, incident commanders, and disaster volunteer groups, to help plan for and manage spontaneous volunteers. It may also be used as a general reference to guide development of a facility-specific volunteer plan.

**Education and Training**


This webpage provides links to course materials for a training on how to manage spontaneous volunteers during disasters. Objectives include how to: understand spontaneous volunteers and the benefits and burden they can bring; identify the fundamentals of volunteer management in a disaster response setting; learn and use the vocabulary and concepts of disaster and disaster management; and understand the role of technology and social media in managing spontaneous volunteers in times of disaster.


This 4-hour course provides strategies for identifying, recruiting, assigning, training, supervising, and motivating volunteers before, during, and after a severe emergency or major disaster.


The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Training Plan is a suggested guide for training MRC Volunteers at the local level. It presents a “menu” of options to guide MRC Unit leaders and volunteers with trainings that align with the Competencies for Disaster Medicine and Public Health.


This 4-part course was developed to help Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Unit Leaders manage their MRC units. *Volunteer Management-Part 1* discusses volunteer performance evaluation, including disciplinary action and dismissal, and may be helpful to healthcare facilities in the development of disaster volunteer management plans.
This course provides an overview of the functions of organization, notification, assembly, dispatch, and demobilization of volunteers in an emergency. Although created to support a jurisdictional public health agency's response to incidents of public health significance, the general principles of volunteer management presented in this course may be applicable to the development of a healthcare facility’s disaster volunteer plan.

This second module in a series on volunteer management includes information on identifying the types and numbers of volunteers needed for a response; working with external partners; and managing spontaneous volunteers. Although created to support a jurisdictional public health agency's response to incidents of public health significance, the general principles of volunteer management presented in this course may be applicable to the development of a healthcare facility’s disaster volunteer plan.

This third course in a series on volunteer management includes information on managing volunteer stress; tracking volunteers at an emergency site; evaluating volunteer performance; and demobilizing volunteers. Although created to support a jurisdictional public health agency's response to incidents of public health significance, the general principles of volunteer management presented in this course may be applicable to the development of a healthcare facility’s disaster volunteer plan.

This 1.5-hour course provides an overview of public health law in emergency preparedness. Legal questions relating to the use of medical or public health volunteers during emergencies are addressed.
Incorporating Volunteers into Healthcare Disaster Response


While not written specifically for the use of volunteer medical professionals, this document provides general guidance to support the creation of a Disaster Volunteer Plan for a healthcare facility.


The author examines recent research on spontaneous volunteerism and how to manage it.


This document contains considerations for the use of volunteers during disasters, and may be used as a reference for developing a healthcare facility volunteer plan.


This document defines four key functions for Volunteer Management (Coordinate volunteers; Notify volunteers; Organize, assemble, and dispatch volunteers; and Demobilize volunteers). Although written for public health departments, some of the tasks noted are also applicable to the development of healthcare facility volunteer plans.


This document summarizes the presentations and discussions from a workshop focused on identifying “the key resources, tools, and opportunities necessary to support the development of a robust, scalable, and regularly engaged disaster health volunteer workforce” to meet the anticipated needs of the future.


This document was developed in support of a national strategy for managing spontaneous volunteers during disasters. It includes principles of, and concept of operations for, managing spontaneous unaffiliated volunteers.

This document defines best practices in the area of volunteer rights and responsibilities. These rights include: right to supervision, direction, and training; right to safe work environment; and right to clear expectations for volunteers.


This article provides information on risk reduction strategies for organizations that use volunteers.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response. (n.d.) Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP), (Accessed 8/28/17.)

This webpage describes the Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) program, which provides standards and guidelines to assist states with setting up standardized volunteer databases to support public health and medical response during disasters. ESAR-VHP registries allow volunteers' identities, licenses, credentials, accreditations, and hospital privileges to be verified in advance of an emergency, facilitating more rapid deployment.


This document describes procedures for granting disaster privileges to volunteer licensed independent health practitioners, and allied health professionals, when a healthcare facility is unable to provide patient care using its credentialed staff, and its Emergency Management Plan has been activated.


This document describes policies and procedures for the temporary assignment and oversight of volunteer health professionals by a healthcare facility when its disaster plan has been activated, and external assistance is needed to continue to provide patient care.

Legal Issues and Volunteers


This article provides an overview of licensure issues and relevant laws pertaining to healthcare professionals during disasters or emergencies.
This toolkit consists of a series of fact sheets and executive overviews focused on key concepts regarding emergency response volunteers, including types of volunteers; federal and state laws governing or affecting volunteers; and volunteer registration, licensing, credentialing, and privileging.


This one-page quick reference guide summarizes concepts and issues pertinent to emergency volunteers. It also includes an overview of state and federal laws that provide liability coverage and/or immunity to volunteers, and notes when such protections would apply.


This report provides an overview of the federal and state liability protections available to volunteer health professionals.


This slide-based presentation with bulleted text and helpful graphics describes different types of emergency declarations, notes differences between states, provides examples of liability issues during disasters, and discusses the federal- and state-level availability of liability and workers’ compensation coverage for volunteers.


The authors discuss the application of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) for volunteer deployment; gaps in the tort liability and workers’ compensation coverage it offers; and how the Uniform Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioners Act and other provisions address the limitations of protections under EMAC.


This webpage provides information on the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), a congressionally-mandated interstate mutual aid agreement that has been adopted by all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Under EMAC, state assets (supplies, equipment, and/or volunteers) may be deployed to a requesting state. Reimbursement, liability, compensation, and licensure issues are also addressed. The website has links to training and education resources, as well as a document library, and
information on deployable resources. The “Learn about EMAC” menu provides helpful documents for those not familiar with the agreement and process.


The aim of this guide is to provide an overview of volunteers and liability; a summary of the law and liability; list sources of liability protection (e.g., volunteer acts and Good Samaritan laws); and explain risk management as it relates to liability. Also included are checklists that can be tailored by volunteer organizations.


This webpage provides information on which states have adopted the Uniform Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioners Act (UEVHPA), and which states have introduced legislation to do so. Links to the Uniform Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioners Act, a Legislative Information Kit, and other helpful resources are also available.


This is the text of the Volunteer Protection Act, which provides volunteers of nonprofit organizations or governmental entities some liability protections for economic damages resulting from activities relating to the work of the organizations. It does not cover gross negligence, willful misconduct, recklessness, or acts committed by the volunteer while intoxicated or operating a motor vehicle. Volunteers must be licensed or certified, as required to fulfill their assigned duties.

University of Pittsburgh. (n.d.). **Emergency Law Inventory.** (Accessed 8/28/17.)

This webpage describes laws and compacts related to volunteer liability, license reciprocity, scope of practice, and workers’ benefits. Information is searchable by profession, state, and status of emergency declaration.

**Lessons Learned**


The authors surveyed members of Australian Disaster Medical Assistance Teams and identified human resource issues (such as ideal shift length and role clarification) related to their deployment that should be considered in the development of disaster volunteer plans.

The authors define convergent volunteerism as “the arrival of unexpected or uninvited personnel wishing to render aid at the scene of a large-scale emergency incident.” They examine past incidents and recommend that healthcare providers contribute to the local response and consider becoming trained, credentialed, and integrated as members of local emergency medical systems and teams.

Fahim, C., O'Sullivan, T., and Lane, D. (2014). Supports for Health and Social Service Providers from Canada Responding to the Disaster in Haiti.

The authors surveyed Canadian health professionals who volunteered in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake to assess the effectiveness of supports provided to them. They evaluated training strategies; safety and security supports; psychological and emotional supports; physical supports; team dynamics and effective team leaders; communication between the field and headquarters; and communication with the media. They concluded that improvements in training and provision of supports are needed to enhance volunteer effectiveness.


This report details the successes and challenges associated with the deployment of Medical Reserve Corps volunteers during the response to Superstorm Sandy in 2012. The lessons learned related to communications are broadly applicable to the use of volunteers to support disaster response.


The authors examined the effect of a newly-developed regional healthcare coalition (in south Central Pennsylvania) on six surge capacity-related objectives. In a two-year period, the healthcare coalition improved areas under all objectives. They authors also found that designating and training a coordinator for the state healthcare volunteer database contributed to a significant increase in volunteer registrations from among the participating hospitals.

The authors discuss survey findings that suggest a gender difference in readiness to deploy, as well as a correlation between positive attitudes about training and deployment. The research could be used to inform training for volunteers, as well as policies to support female disaster volunteers.

**Plans, Tools, and Templates**


This plan describes Arizona’s approach to coordinating the credentialing, verification, recruitment, activation, notification, deployment, movement, and demobilization of volunteers using its Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) program. The plan structure and issues considered may be helpful to healthcare facilities in the development of plans to manage disaster volunteers.


This plan is an annex to the Monterey Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), and establishes operational protocols for coordinating spontaneous unaffiliated volunteers, as well as affiliated volunteers for the Monterey County Operational Area.


This document provides guidelines, procedures, and policies to assist community clinics with incorporating volunteers into their disaster response plans. The document may also be used as a reference for developing a disaster volunteer plan for other healthcare settings.

The Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County. (2013). [Disaster Volunteer Utilization Plan: Planning Template](#).

This toolkit is a companion to The Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County’s [Disaster Volunteer Utilization Plan: Guidance Document](#). Its content may be modified, as needed, to create planning tools for managing volunteers in the healthcare setting.


This template includes a range of concepts and considerations related to volunteer management and use. The authors note that in the rare event that federal responders may be deployed to assist, the procedures described in this document can be tailored to help integrate them into a healthcare organization’s response operations.

This document identifies key planning and operational considerations for managing emergency volunteers in hospitals. It includes a planning checklist, templates, guidance, and resources for integrating emergency volunteers during a medical surge event.


This document provides a tabletop exercise template to assist clinics with developing a plan to use volunteers during disasters. The guidance questions included may be referenced on their own for plan development.


This plan template can be tailored by emergency planners, incident commanders, and disaster volunteer groups, to help plan for and manage spontaneous volunteers. It may also be used as a general reference to guide development of a facility-specific volunteer plan.


This template may be used to guide healthcare facilities in the development of agreements to share staff during emergencies or disasters.

**Volunteer Program Management**


This 4-hour course provides strategies for identifying, recruiting, assigning, training, supervising, and motivating volunteers before, during, and after a severe emergency or major disaster.


This document contains information to assist volunteer managers with developing their volunteer program, including defining a mission and vision; documenting volunteer roles and responsibilities; marketing and branding of the program; recruiting volunteers; and developing human resource policies for their volunteer program.

This document provides guidance for local Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteer coordinators to support their recruitment efforts. It reviews the importance of defining the mission and vision for your volunteer unit; determining the numbers and types of volunteers that are needed to support your mission; and different recruitment tools that may be used.


The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Training Plan is a suggested guide for training MRC Volunteers at the local level. It presents a “menu” of options to guide MRC Unit leaders and volunteers with trainings that align with the Competencies for Disaster Medicine and Public Health.


This program matches new Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Unit Leaders with experienced Unit Leaders to “overcome potential challenges” a new MRC Unit Leader might face.


These slides are from a webinar that provided an overview of Mission Ready Packages (MRPs) and examples of potential MRPs that MRC units could develop based on their local community response needs and the volunteer capabilities within their unit.


This fact sheet provides information on the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Core Competencies, organized into 4 learning paths. These core competencies define the baseline level of knowledge and skills for all MRC volunteers. A detailed training plan based on these core competencies and learning paths may be found on the NACCHO MRC webpage, as well.


This 4-part course was developed to help Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Unit Leaders manage their MRC units. *Volunteer Management-Part 1* discusses volunteer performance evaluation, including disciplinary action and dismissal, and may be helpful to healthcare facilities in the development of disaster volunteer management plans.

This webpage includes a list of the 11 core competencies for disaster health, along with links to resources to support each of the competencies.


This document lists the members of the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD), along with a brief description of what each agency does. It may be used for partnership building among volunteer groups.

Agencies and Organizations

Note: The agencies and organizations listed in this section have a page, program, or specific research dedicated to this topic area.

American Red Cross. Become a Volunteer.


National Volunteer Fire Council.

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response. Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP).


U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response. National Disaster Medical System (NDMS).

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