

STRATEGIES FOR INCIDENT PREPAREDNESS

M. Blum¹, S. Jurgens¹, T. Gillison¹

¹ CIMERC at Drexel University, USA

mbb33@drexel.edu

OBJECTIVE: The National Bioterrorism Civilian Medical Response Center (CIMERC) develops tools to meet the needs of health care organizations, emergency managers, and disaster responders challenged by disparate capabilities and limited resources, as they plan for an integrated response to natural or man-made disasters.

METHOD: In 2001, CIMERC convened a consortium of hospital professionals and disaster response experts to address the challenges of a coordinated response effort. The result was the development of a collection of adaptable scenarios that can be used as tabletop exercises in any community, whether rural or urban. The scenarios are designed to allow users to tailor the exercises to their specific demographics, geography and regional needs, and includes a series of planning considerations and questions that assist with policy development. CIMERC continues to improve the tool and in 2006 incorporated special considerations for disabled populations. Recognizing that complex medical emergencies are not limited by geo-political boundaries, the workbook has been culturally adapted and translated into Spanish by teams of subject matter experts, and presented internationally in Latin and South America.

RESULTS: Strategies for Incident Preparedness (SIP) is a collection of disaster scenarios designed as a training workbook for use by hospitals and health care professionals to bolster preparedness. To make the tool as useful as possible, the workbook includes many thought provoking questions, as well as reference documents for users. It is available in hardcopy, electronic media and via the web.

CONCLUSION: The SIP can be used to generate awareness and to conduct drills internally within hospitals and across health systems, and externally with multiple agencies and partners involved in disaster response. The availability of this tool augments disaster planning, and helps to ensure a well thought out and coordinated response to all types of disasters, resulting in safer communities worldwide.

KEYWORDS: Preparedness, Training, Disaster Response