



# Rx Response Report:

## Spring 2014 Update

### Rx Response Expands Disaster Preparedness and Response Services



[Rx Response](#) has established a new membership structure that now enables individual companies in the bio-pharmaceutical supply chain to become direct members.

The move opens the door for individual companies to enhance their disaster preparedness and response capabilities by tapping Rx Response's accurate and timely information, direct support during disasters, government relationships and industry networking. Government officials will still be able to participate at no cost.

"We're very excited to begin recruiting companies to join Rx Response," said Rx Response Executive Director Erin Mullen, RPh, PhD, CEM. "Many of the companies we'll be talking with have already invested in disaster planning but their active involvement in Rx Response will significantly boost their readiness. It will also open new doors for them to work with federal and state officials who can help companies address challenges posed by large-scale disasters.

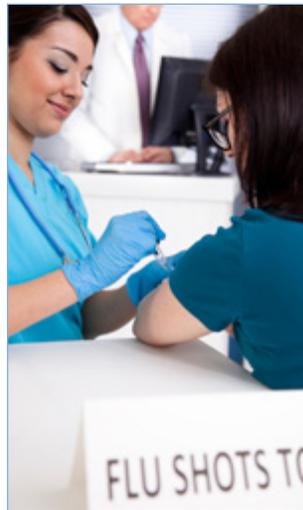
In addition to restructuring its membership, Rx Response received official approval from the IRS for its application to become a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in December 2013.



To learn more about the benefits offered to Rx Response bio-pharmaceutical supply chain members, visit <http://www.rxresponse.org/join/support-for-private-sector>.

To learn more about how Rx Response supports public health, emergency management, homeland security and other government officials, visit <http://www.rxresponse.org/join/support-for-government>.

### Community Pharmacists: The Ultimate Booster Shot for America's Vaccination Capacity



One of the mantras of emergency management is "practice the plan," meaning that you will respond best during a disaster with what you are familiar with. Pharmacists represent an underutilized partnering opportunity for public health to support increasing access to immunizations – whether that be everyday or during a public health emergency. When the H1N1 pandemic hit the United States in 2009, Rx Response helped facilitate meetings and

discussions that led to a dramatically expanded role for community pharmacists in what became the largest influenza vaccination campaign in the U.S. Four years later, Rx Response continues to advance the role of community pharmacists in administering vaccines to address a range of public health threats from seasonal influenza to tetanus and hepatitis.

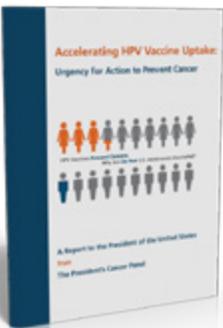
"The critical role community pharmacists played in administering vaccines during the H1N1 pandemic earned them a permanent and growing role in our nation's vaccination strategy," said Erin Mullen, Executive Director of Rx Response.

Despite having the authority to administer the influenza vaccine in all 50 states, as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, pharmacists in some states are still limited in their ability to further increase vaccination rates by state laws and rules that restrict the age of patients who pharmacists can vaccinate and/or the portfolio of vaccines that pharmacists can offer. Public health emergency response may also be hindered by regulations



that were centered on pharmacists managing chronic disease rather than serving as a full partner with public health.

Since the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, CDC officials have stepped up their work with community pharmacists to assess their ability to play a larger role in vaccination efforts. At the recent 2014 Preparedness Summit, Rx Response board members Alex Adams and Erin Mullen participated in an invitation-only, day-long meeting organized by CDC, ASTHO, and NACCHO to discuss how to further expand the role of community pharmacists in improving access to pandemic influenza countermeasures. According to NACDS, a longtime member of Rx Response, in the 2012-2013 flu season, approximately 20 percent of U.S. adults received their influenza vaccine at their local supermarket or pharmacy,



second only to a doctor's office. Adding to the voices calling for an expansion of pharmacists' vaccination efforts, a [recent report from The President's Cancer Panel](#) made a specific recommendation to the President to enact laws and implement policies that will allow pharmacists to administer vaccines to adolescents, including younger adolescents.

In testimony before Congress last year, NACDS reported that the CDC has specifically asked the pharmacy community for their continued support in efforts to help address vaccination needs in their local communities, a need NACDS said is especially vital in rural, and some suburban, areas with limited physician access. The American Pharmacists Association now estimates that 200,000 pharmacists are certified to provide vaccinations.

"We appreciate the work Rx Response has done to promote the value of community pharmacists in expanding our nation's vaccination capacity, not only to protect against pandemics but to tackle other threats to patient health," said Kathleen Jaeger, Senior Vice President for Pharmacy Care and Patient Advocacy for the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) and a member of the Rx Response Board of Directors.

In its testimony to Congress last year, NACDS reported that more than 50,000 adults in the United States die from vaccine-preventable diseases each year. NACDS also cited studies showing that pharmacist-provided immunization services increase the overall immunization rates and that states allowing expanded pharmacist immunizations have a greater percentage of patients 65 and older who were vaccinated. According to NACDS, immunizations, including those administered by pharmacists, help prevent 14 million cases of disease and 33,000 deaths every year.

## Nationwide Infectious Disease Outbreak is Focus of 2014 Rx Response Exercise

Register Today to Participate for Free



Last year, a mock earthquake in the San Francisco Bay area was the scenario for the highly successful Rx Response disaster exercise that drew wide participation with over 25 organizations from the bio-pharmaceutical supply chain, government and other non-profits.

This year, the mock exercise scenario is a pandemic influenza, recalling the nation's last real brush with a pandemic in 2009. That real world event triggered significant changes that included increasing the role of community pharmacists as part of the nation's vaccination capacity.

The [2014 Rx Response Exercise](#) will take place on **June 19, 2014**. The exercise this year is **free and virtual** enabling participants



to take part from their office where they will be challenged by an array of impacts and will be expected to "play along" by sending and receiving emails and exchanging

phone calls and text messages with Rx Response and other participants. "Our goal is to ensure that your plans are tested and that you can see in an exercise how Rx Response can be a key source of information for your organization during a crisis," said Emily Lord, Rx Response's Director of Operations.

The 2014 exercise is well suited to private sector members of the bio-pharmaceutical supply chain with responsibility for:

- Business Continuity (BC)
- Crisis Management (CM)
- Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE)
- Human Resources (HR)
- Security
- Supply Chain/Logistics

Federal and state public health officials and emergency managers are also encouraged to participate, as well as executives of non-profit organizations working in disaster response or public health. Anyone interested in participating is encouraged to learn more at [www.rxresponse.org/2014-exercise](http://www.rxresponse.org/2014-exercise) and email us at [contactus@rxresponse.org](mailto:contactus@rxresponse.org). Participation will be limited and slots will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

## Major U.S. Retailers Help Bolster Power of Rx Open Tool

In recent months, a number of major U.S. retailers have signed up to participate in the *Rx Open* tool, an online resource that helps emergency managers, health care professionals and citizens in disaster-affected areas find open pharmacies. The retailers are members of the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS), a leading Rx Response member that was instrumental in recruiting their retail members to join *Rx Open*.

The recent additions bring 6,000 new pharmacies to the *Rx Open* database that can now report on the status of approximately 80% of the community pharmacies in the United States and Puerto Rico.



*Rx Open*, a powerful online tool that maps the location of open pharmacies in a disaster-impacted area, was first developed by Rx Response in 2010 and earned praise from former Homeland Security Secretary Janet

Napolitano for its contributions following Hurricane Sandy. Among the major new retailers who agreed to share their open status with the *Rx Open* tool in 2013 are Costco, Rite Aid, Publix, Safeway, and Supervalu.



“We applaud our members for opting into the *Rx Open* tool,” said Kathleen Yeager, Senior Vice President for Pharmacy Care and Patient Advocacy for NACDS and a member of the Rx Response Board of Directors. “This step will make it easier for the customers of our member retailers to know where they can get prescriptions filled if a disaster strikes their community.”

Additional information on the *Rx Open* tool can be found at [www.rxopen.org](http://www.rxopen.org).

## Perry Fri: A Key Leader in Supply Chain Management



Rx Response is pleased to profile Perry Fri, the Executive Vice President of Industry Relations, Membership & Education at the Healthcare Management and Distribution Association (HDMA). Perry is a longtime Rx Response leader who currently serves as a member of the Rx Response Board of Directors and the Leadership Advisory Council.

### Q. What role does HDMA play within Rx Response?

**A.** HDMA is the only association among the Rx Response members that works directly with the pharmaceutical distributors in the health care supply chain. We are able to provide access for Rx Response to those members and we have a key role in sharing the information Rx Response provides during emergencies back to our full membership so they can more efficiently respond in emergency situations.

### Q. How has Rx Response been a benefit to HDMA?

**A.** HDMA and its members play an important role in the supply chain as distributors helping to manage logistics, inventories and information. We keep our pharmacy customers in business by supplying them with products. During an emergency situation, our ability to fulfill our mission can be challenged. So one of the greatest benefits HDMA and our members derive from our association with Rx Response is the access the program gives us to public health officials and emergency managers at the local, state and federal level. These relationships have been helpful in enabling our members to work with the right authorities to get delivery trucks through police checkpoints.

Rx Response also provides us with valuable situational awareness about a particular emergency so we can focus our response efforts and know what obstacles we might face. Another area where Rx Response has also been a great value to HDMA and our members is in tackling issues of specific concern to our members, not only during an emergency but post disaster when everyone is assessing lessons learned and opportunities to enhance response in a future disaster. Credentialing is a good example of an issue that significantly impacts our members trying to deliver products to customers in a disaster-impacted area. Not only is Rx Response helping us address credentialing during a disaster, but more broadly, Rx Response has been a good coordinating vehicle for our industry to have discussions about topics like credentialing.

**Q. How do you see Rx Response's non-profit status benefiting the program?**

**A.** I think this is an important step. As an independent organization, Rx Response is no longer embedded within a supply chain trade association, as had been the case in the past. This move puts a greater focus on the work that Rx Response is doing. It also presents Rx Response with the opportunity to re-introduce the program and highlight its services and what it can bring to the table in terms of helping the bio-pharmaceutical industry better respond to the needs of patients, pharmacies and local health officials.

**Q. What are your thoughts about Rx Response's soon to be launched recruitment drive targeting direct members?**

**A.** I think there's going to be strong interest on the part of individual companies within HDMA and other supply chain trade associations in becoming direct members of Rx Response. The challenge of course is finding the right people inside the right companies who focus on issues of emergency response and planning. As we identify these individuals, we're confident they'll see Rx Response as an excellent vehicle to connect with like-minded peers and discuss best practices and find new ways to respond to emergencies. HDMA has always enabled our member companies to benefit from the support we receive from Rx Response. But I believe that if an HDMA member company becomes directly involved in Rx Response, they will be able to get even more out of the resources Rx Response provides.

**Q. Tell us about your professional experience in the bio-pharmaceutical industry.**

**A.** I've been with HDMA for almost 8 years. My background has largely been working in trade associations with a focus on the supply chain and logistics side of different industries that rely on distributor networks to get products to the customer. I've been involved with the food service and grocery industry and with HDMA my focus is now the medical and pharmaceutical sector. When I started with HDMA, my original role was leading industry relations, which related primarily to helping our members address supply chain management issues. In this capacity, I worked extensively on developing guidelines for leveraging technology to improve logistics. I also worked on early issues relating to serialization and traceability. I eventually took on broader responsibilities in leading our membership and education functions, as well as industry relations. I'm also helping HDMA assess the role our organization should be playing internationally.

## National Lt. Governors Association Passes Resolution in Support of Rx Response



Lt. Governors play a vital role in state government beyond the role in succession. Many serve as state senate presidents, as leaders of divisions of government, or may be seated on the Governors' cabinets. While roles beyond succession vary state by state,

the nation's lieutenant governors directly impact states in profound ways. That made the resolution passed by the National Lt. Governors Association (NLGA) supporting Rx Response all the more exciting. [The resolution supporting Rx Response](#), passed by the NLGA in 2013, was sponsored by Louisiana Lt. Governor Jay Dardenne (R) and Rhode Island Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts (D). In its resolution, the NLGA encouraged states to review their policies regarding disaster and emergency response and work with Rx Response and industry organizations as part of their state strategy for emergency preparedness. The resolution also encouraged states to educate their citizens about the importance of individual preparedness by utilizing Rx Response's [Rx On The Run](#) tool available at [www.rxresponse.org/resources/rx-on-the-run](http://www.rxresponse.org/resources/rx-on-the-run).

## Podcast Provides Disaster Preparedness Tips for Independent Pharmacies



In a 2013 interview with Pharmacy Podcast founder Todd Eury, Rx Response Executive Director Erin Mullen provided some excellent tips to help smaller, privately owned pharmacies plan for disasters. This is a critical area many pharmacy owners struggle to address given the competing demands on their time. When disaster strikes and community pharmacies are forced to close, having a disaster plan in place can help a community pharmacy re-open faster, something customers will greatly appreciate. Take a listen to this helpful podcast at [www.rxresponse.org/news](http://www.rxresponse.org/news) and you'll realize that creating a disaster plan isn't as complicated as it might seem.



## Collaboration: The Rx for Disaster Readiness

Rx Response leaders continue to engage with government officials and the bio-pharmaceutical industry through briefings, presentations and panel discussions at key conferences and meetings throughout the U.S.

There's a great deal of important work happening at these events, and Rx Response is pleased to highlight the collaboration taking place to help make America a safer, more disaster resilient nation.

### RECENT EVENTS

#### HSIN Advisory Committee Meeting

**April 2014** — Rx Response continues to participate in the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) Advisory Committee meetings, which provide independent advice and recommendations to the leadership of the Department of Homeland Security on the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN).

#### Public Health Preparedness Conference

**April 2014** — The 2014 Preparedness Summit, which convened



Rx Response Executive Director Erin Mullen talks with NACCHO's Jack Herrmann, Senior Advisor and Chief, Public Health Programs at the 2014 Preparedness Summit in Atlanta, GA.

in Atlanta, is the premier national conference in the field of public health preparedness. It provides one of the only cross-disciplinary learning opportunities in the field. Dr. Mullen participated in a workshop entitled *Innovative Methods to Improve Access to Vaccines in Pandemic Influenza*.

#### IOM Workshop to Advance Regional Disaster Response Coordination

**March 2014** — Rx Response participated in this IOM-sponsored workshop in Irvine, CA, which addressed bringing multiple groups and sectors together that don't routinely work with each other. The goal of the collaboration was to augment community response to a disaster when multiple geographic areas are affected. The first in a series of three workshops, the focus of this session was on coordination at a regional level helping the whole of community—organizations, partners, and stakeholders—plan and prepare for health incidents in order to provide robust health outcomes.

#### Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Capstone Disaster Exercise

**March 2014** — Rx Response's Director of Operations, Emily Lord, took part in an exercise that simulated a devastating



Emily Lord, Rx Response Director of Operations, and Kevin Peach, Program Manager with the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD), were situated in the Master Control Center for the DHS Capstone Exercise. Rx Response recently entered into a partnership MOU with NVOAD to provide bio-pharmaceutical industry-related support to the organization.

earthquake lasting nearly 5 minutes and registering 9.2 on the Richter scale. The mock earthquake was centered approximately 70 miles east of Anchorage and produced a 46 foot high tsunami that struck Seward, Alaska. Lord was situated inside the master control center for the exercise and demonstrated Rx Response's operational coordination capabilities and its ability to share information between government and the bio-pharmaceutical supply chain.

#### HDMA Conference Addresses Post-Disaster Credentialing

**March 2014** — The Healthcare Distribution Management Association (HDMA) Distribution Management Conference and Technology Expo took place in Palm Desert, CA, and attracted thought-provoking speakers and future forward service providers offering solutions that directly affect business operations. Dr. Mullen attended and met with a number of delegates. A topic of importance to both HDMA and Rx Response was addressed at the conference by [Gregory J. Halvacs](#), Senior Vice President and Chief Security Officer, Cardinal Health, Inc. Halvacs led a session titled *Enabling Emergency Access for Critical Recovery* that highlighted emerging efforts at the regional level to coordinate reentry to disaster-affected areas in a safe, secure and controlled manner.

#### American Society for Informatics in Pharmacy Helps Boost Pharmacy Readiness

**January 2014** — Dr. Mullen gave a presentation entitled *How Normal Business Operations Can Enhance Disaster Response & Community Resiliency*. The session's goals were to teach pharmacists how to identify the roles and responsibilities for community pharmacies following natural disasters and describe actions that state governments may take that may impact pharmacy practice and patient care in emergency situations. The session also identified best practices for pharmacy business continuity planning.



## Superstorm Sandy: Lessons Learned in Health Systems Resilience



**December 2013** — This event was the third of four forums in a series funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to examine ways that cities can enhance the resilience of key systems or

sectors to include transportation, energy, health, and risk management. Dr. Mullen attended along with high ranking government officials and leaders representing healthcare and public health. The National Center for Disaster Preparedness (NCDP) at Columbia University, and the Kostas Research Institute will produce a report based on this event which will be available later this year.

## Assessing ACA's Impact on U.S. Preparedness

**November 2013** — Dr. Mullen attended a workshop entitled *The Impact of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act on U.S. Preparedness Resources and Programs* in Washington, DC. The workshop focused on examining how the changes to the health system as a result of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) may impact the medical and public health preparedness programs across the nation, and how the ACA provisions may be leveraged to strengthen the resilience of the medical and public health preparedness systems. The key issue addressed was the integration of newly evolving Health Information Networks and patient medication history information – information that is essential following a disaster.

## Public Health Preparedness Front and Center at IOM Forum

**October 2013** — Dr. Mullen participated in this forum which focused on Biomedical and Health Research under the direction of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Board on Health Sciences Policy. The Forum provides a neutral venue for broad ranging policy discussions that serve to facilitate coordination and cooperation among the public and private stakeholders in developing and enhancing the nation's medical and public health preparedness.

## NCDMPH Pushes Training to Boost Readiness

**September 2013** — Dr. Mullen attended the *Learning in Disaster Health Workshop*, a continuing education workshop in Georgetown, which was sponsored by the National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health (NCDMPH). Attendees came together to address how the nation can effectively conduct education and training in disaster health to mitigate death and injuries from all-hazard disasters.

## NEMA Annual Policy & Leadership Forum

**September 2013** — Rx Response's Executive Director Dr. Erin Mullen traveled to Alaska to present to the National Emergency Management Association's (NEMA) Response & Recovery Committee. NEMA was a very early supporter of Rx Response and the presentation gave Mullen the opportunity to update NEMA members on Rx Response's work in recent years including its Hurricane Sandy activities.

## Pharmacist Tweet-A-Thon Trumpets Pharmacists' Positive Contributions

Rx Response Executive Director Erin Mullen is a former practicing pharmacist who filled thousands of prescriptions before diving full time into the disaster planning and response side of the pharmacy world. Mullen's connection to pharmacists is still strong as evidenced by her participation in the October 3, 2013 Tweet-A-Thon. That day, more than 30 pharmacy organizations across the globe took to Twitter to highlight the positive impact that pharmacists have on their patients, communities, and the health care industry. Mullen contributed nicely to the global flood of tweets, firing off 18 tweets and retweets during the online celebration of pharmacists.



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