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## **Rx Response Beefs Up Technology for 2012 Hurricane Season**

### Improvements will Enhance Patient Access to Medicine in Major Disasters

Washington, D.C. - The 2012 Atlantic hurricane season is set to officially begin and Rx Response has launched two technology enhancements to make the program an even more powerful resource in helping to ensure the continued flow of medicine to patients following a major hurricane or other disaster.

The technology enhancements launched for the start of the 2012 hurricane season include a smart phone-friendly version of the [RxResponse.org](http://RxResponse.org) website and important upgrades to the *Pharmacy Status Reporting Tool* (PSRT).

Rx Response, an initiative of America's biopharmaceutical supply system partners, helps ensure the continued flow of medicine following a large scale natural or manmade disaster. The program relies on a robust information sharing and problem-solving platform that provides a single point of contact for government officials to interact with the bio-pharmaceutical industry. This single point of contact also facilitates streamlined interaction between members of the bio-pharmaceutical supply chain.

The new smart phone-friendly website will provide access to critical online Rx Response resources including the PSRT, activation status for emergencies, emergency situation reports and the downloadable prescription medication wallet card. The card enables citizens to fill in the names of their medications and other key information online, including phone numbers for doctors and pharmacies, and then print out the card which can be kept in a person's wallet or purse.

"As more and more emergency managers and public health officials rely on smart phones, we want Rx Response's critical resources to be readily accessible whether someone is working in an emergency operations center or out in the field responding to a disaster," said Rx Response Director Erin Mullen.

Mullen urged her public health and emergency management community colleagues to encourage citizens to visit [RxResponse.org](http://RxResponse.org) and fill out the downloadable prescription medication wallet card before a disaster strikes. Often, people are forced to leave an area due to a disaster and fail to bring important medical information with them, including the names and dosages of critical medicines. Filling out the prescription medication card before a disaster strikes and carrying the card will help everyone to be better prepared if disaster forces them to refill prescriptions in an unfamiliar location where they are unknown by pharmacists.

## Enhanced Pharmacy Status Reporting Tool Enables More Accurate Reporting of Open Pharmacies

This year's second Rx Response technology enhancement for the hurricane season is the beefed up *Pharmacy Status Reporting Tool (PSRT)*, which displays on the RxResponse.org website pharmacies that have resumed serving the public following a major disaster. The PSRT works when pharmacies transmit billing data to national billing service providers thus indicating that a pharmacy is open and serving the public.

A key PRST enhancement is a new feedback tool that enables emergency managers, public health officials and pharmacy staff to provide status updates about open pharmacies in their location. The tool can also be used to submit questions to Rx Response staff. Since there could be instances in which pharmacies are transmitting billing data but have limited capabilities due to the impact of the disaster, the ability of personnel on the ground to provide first-hand information about a pharmacy's level of service will help Rx Response provide more accurate information about the status of individual pharmacies.

Rx Response has also modified the PSRT reporting function to provide additional information on overall pharmacy services in a disaster impacted area. This includes a county-by-county display of open pharmacies as well as individual pharmacy status. This enhancement arose following the extensive winter ice storms in 2011.

Rx Response Director Mullen also encouraged emergency managers and public health officials to familiarize themselves with the PRST before disaster strikes to be better prepared to use it in an emergency. Mullen called on pharmacy staff to use their new capabilities to communicate with Rx Response during a disaster to help enhance the accuracy of the information provided on the PRST. Pharmacists interested in learning about their pharmacy's participation in the PRST can email Rx Response at [info@rxresponse.org](mailto:info@rxresponse.org).

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