



Understanding Patient Needs in Disasters

How Healthcare Ready tracks and responds to patient needs during disasters

Understanding patient needs and helping patients meet those needs during disasters is at the core of disaster response activations. This document illustrates Healthcare Ready's major activities related to helping meet specific patient needs during a response.

Prescription Refill Needs

- **State law and waiver tracking** – States often issue waivers or suspensions to standard pharmacy laws during disasters or declared states of emergency in order to allow patients more flexibility in obtaining advance and/or emergency refills of their medications. Since pharmacy laws vary by state and territory, HcR aggregates resources by state on the Healthcare Ready website. (See our [Hurricane Florence Resources page](#) for an example of this.)
- **Prescription Assistance program tracking** – HcR closely tracks activation of prescription assistance programs like the Federal [Emergency Prescription Assistance Program](#), or EPAP, during emergency events. We regularly amplify the status of these programs and share educational resources on how patients can access them.
- **Insurance and payer information** – HcR also compiles medical insurance-related resources, such as insurance company hotlines and specific company guidance, for patients and caregivers to reference during disasters. (See our [Plans and Payers document](#) from Hurricane Florence for an example.)
- **Rx Open** – [Rx Open](#) is our free pharmacy status tracking map, which patients can use to locate open pharmacies near them in areas impacted by disaster.

Needs of Distinct Patient Groups

- **Guidance and resources sharing** – We partner with patient groups such as the [Kidney Community emergency Response Coalition \(KCER\)](#) and health departments to amplify resources available for distinct patient groups. Patient groups for which we share information include diabetic patients, end-stage renal disease (ESRD) patients, and patients with chronic heart conditions.

Transportation Dependencies

- **Coordinating patient transportation** – We work with local government, community organizations, and patient advocacy groups to coordinate emergency transportation for groups and individuals to ensure they receive their necessary healthcare (e.g., dialysis). We are often secure transportation for patients through donated rides from services like Uber and Lyft.



Comfort Items and Over-the-Counter Medicines

- **Coordinating provision of comfort kits** – We recognize that over-the-counter (OTC) medications and hygiene items are important for shelters and for patients returning home. We work with partner organizations to provide and route supplies and comfort kits to patients in areas impacted by disasters.

If you would like to request assistance from Healthcare Ready during a disaster, call our hotline at 866-247-2694 or email us at alerts@healthcareready.org.