



# Rx Response Report:

## Spring/Summer 2013 Update

### Rx Response Disaster Exercise Tests Bio-pharmaceutical Industry Response Capabilities

When “news” of a simulated 7.9 magnitude mock earthquake in the San Francisco Bay area quickly spread throughout the bio-pharmaceutical supply chain and to the highest echelons of federal and state government, the imagined physical shock waves were just the beginning of what people feared could be a devastating impact on the Bay area if an actual earthquake were to strike.

Across the nation, nearly 20 bio-pharmaceutical manufacturers, distributors and dispensers representing the entire supply chain participated in the exercise, activating emergency response plans and testing areas of concern unique to each company. For some participating companies, the focus was on accounting for employees at Bay area facilities and determining whether any employees were injured or missing. Others focused on assessing damage to production facilities and determining if employees could safely be dismissed given the state of roads and bridges during a real quake. Manufacturers and retailers participating in the exercise also wanted to test their ability to determine a quake’s impact on the distributors they rely on to ship products.



Realistic-looking news articles were integrated into the Rx Response Disaster Exercise to provide an additional level of realism.

*(continued on page 2)*

### New Rx Response Membership Opportunities on the Horizon for the Healthcare Sector

As Rx Response continues to strengthen its reputation as an indispensable homeland security asset, the program is undergoing significant changes that will provide valuable opportunities for companies and organizations involved in the medical supply chain. Rx Response has incorporated as an independent 501(c)3 charitable organization. The move will bring about significant changes to the governance structure of Rx Response. It will also open the door for individual medical supply chain companies and related organizations to become direct members of Rx Response. This move will enable individual companies to more easily tap the powerful resources of Rx Response during disasters. These resources and services offered to new members are expected to include:

- Credentialing assistance for bio-pharmaceutical delivery fleets seeking post-disaster access to impacted areas
- Advocacy with utility companies and government agencies for priority power restoration for critical facilities
- Assistance with efforts to secure limited fuel supplies to resupply generators for critical healthcare facilities
- Updates during emergencies about government changes to pharmaceutical practice regulations and emergency declarations that affect pharmacy operations:
- Providing government officials with frequent updates on the status of bio-pharmaceutical manufacturers, distributors and dispensers on behalf of Rx Response members so government officials don't need to contact supply chain members in the midst of their efforts to reopen after a disaster, and meet their essential business needs and those of their customers.

Rx Response is finalizing the membership benefits at this time but benefits during non-disaster periods are expected to include:

*(continued on page 3)*



## Rx Response Rebrands Key Post-Disaster Tool to Enhance Access to Medicine

At the National Hurricane Conference in New Orleans earlier this year, Rx Response officials announced a major change in its online Pharmacy Status Reporting Tool (PSRT), a program that won wide praise for its role in helping emergency managers and citizens find open pharmacies following Hurricane Sandy. The Pharmacy Status Reporting Tool is now called *Rx Open* and can be accessed at [www.RxOpen.org](http://www.RxOpen.org). The new name and matching web address is designed to make the program easier to remember, a move Rx Response officials believe will significantly increase the tool's use in future disasters. The tool maps open pharmacies in disaster impacted areas.



*Rx Open* was deployed initially in an 11-state area as Sandy approached the East coast and then focused its reporting on the states directly impacted by the storm. Widespread media coverage of *Rx Open* following Sandy quadrupled traffic to the online tool. In addition, more than 200 pharmacies in the New York and New Jersey area that were not registered in the tool's database asked to be included for future disasters and are now being added. Thousands of additional pharmacies have since asked to be included in the database including Walmart, Costco, Safeway, CERR Drugs, Eagle Pharmacy with 200 pharmacy locations in the Midwest, and Ingles with 83 locations in the southeast.

Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano phoned Rx Response leaders after Hurricane Sandy to thank officials for the PSRT's impact.

"We are excited that our technology was able to make such an important difference for emergency managers and the citizens affected by Hurricane Sandy," said Rx Response Director Erin Mullen, RPh, PhD, CEM. "We're confident that the easy to remember name *Rx Open*, and the corresponding web address, will help make it even easier to get medicine to patients in times of emergency."



In addition to launching *Rx Open* at the National Hurricane Conference, Rx Response officials also unveiled *Rx on the Run*, the new name for its Downloadable Prescription Medication Wallet Card. This online tool enables patients to enter information about prescriptions and contact information for medical providers and print the information on a wallet sized card. This card can serve as a valuable resource if patients are evacuating from a disaster area. *Rx on the Run* is available at [www.RxResponse.org](http://www.RxResponse.org). As with *Rx Open*, the renaming of the Prescription Medication Wallet Card was designed to create a more memorable name that is expected to lead more citizens to use the tool.

Pharmacists interested in learning about their pharmacy's participation in *Rx Open* can email Rx Response at [admin@rxresponse.org](mailto:admin@rxresponse.org).

### *(Disaster Exercise continued)*

Throughout the exercise, executives at bio-pharmaceutical manufacturers like Amgen and Sanofi-Aventis, along with distributors McKesson and Amerisource-Bergin, received unannounced calls from exercise planners posing as internal employees, third party couriers, Rx Response officials, hospital workers and journalists. The calls gave the disaster drill a sense of urgency and realism that helped participating executives get a better sense for what a real disaster response would feel like.

At the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and in other government agencies, exercise participants received calls from Rx Response officials "reporting" the impacts of the mock quake on supply chain companies. This input enabled government officials to assess the simulated needs of impacted companies and determine what steps would be taken to help meet those needs if an actual quake had occurred. The perspective of state and local emergency management officials was included in the exercise thanks to the participation of the California Department of Public Health, the California Board of Pharmacy and the San Francisco Department of Public Health. In addition, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) were actively involved on behalf of the nation's public health officials.

"The Rx Response exercise provided great value to increasing our situational readiness for a real crisis of similar scope," said Chris Wright, Senior Manager, Worldwide Business Continuity & Crisis Management, for Amgen, Inc.

Betsy George, PharmD, the Director of Operations for Medical Affairs for Ferring Pharmaceuticals called the drill "an excellent mock exercise to ensure preparedness during a crisis."

Paul Linsalata, Director, HSE, Business Continuity and Emergency Response at Sanofi-Aventis Pharmaceuticals, and an exercise participant, said, "Rx Responses' goals are in the right place. The organization works hard to bring solutions to patients during disasters. They should be applauded for their contribution."

"This exercise is unprecedented in bringing together such a broad array of public and private sector participants to think through issues and work together to develop solutions so we can all be better prepared in the face of an actual emergency," said Rx Response Director Erin Mullen. "I'm grateful to the many bio-pharmaceutical companies and government agencies that took the time to take part in the exercise."

Members of the bio-pharmaceutical supply chain interested in participating in future Rx Response disaster exercises can contact [admin@rxresponse.org](mailto:admin@rxresponse.org).



### *(Membership Opportunities continued)*

Disaster Exercises — Members will have the opportunity to participate in disaster exercises along with government agencies, NGO's, and other members of the bio-pharmaceutical supply chain.

Benchmarking with Industry Peers — With Rx Response serving as a liaison between members of the bio-pharmaceutical supply chain, individual companies can benchmark their readiness and operational resiliency by learning about best practices and trends among fellow manufacturers, distributors and dispensers, gaining important insight on strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities.

Business Continuity Planning Support — Members of Rx Response will have access to business continuity planning services and disaster resiliency and response best practices materials developed by Rx Response and its business continuity consultants.

Educational Webinars — Members will have the opportunity to participate in Rx Response webinars that specifically address resiliency and response. Speakers could include key federal government officials, experts on various types of terrorist attacks, business continuity, new innovations, etc.

Service on Leadership Group — Direct members who meet or exceed contribution thresholds will have the opportunity to become members of the Rx Response Leadership Group.

Sponsorship & Marketing Opportunities — Members of Rx Response will be entitled to a number of joint sponsorship and marketing opportunities relating to educational activities and events.

Over the past six years, Rx Response has operated as a coalition of the trade associations representing the entire bio-pharmaceutical supply chain, along with the American Red Cross.

As a 501(c)3, Rx Response will operate as an independent not-for-profit corporation controlled by its own Board of Directors. Initial members of the Board of Directors will include Del Persinger, Executive VP and CFO of PhRMA; Perry Fri, HDMA's Sr. VP of Industry Relations, Membership & Education; Bob Billings, Sr. VP Finance, Planning & Special Programs for GPhA; and Kathleen Jaeger, Sr. VP for Pharmacy Care and Patient Advocacy for NACDS. Jaeger also serves in a separate role as president of the NACDS Foundation. A representative of the American Red Cross will also serve on the new Board.

Companies and organizations interested in learning more about direct membership in Rx Response can contact [admin@rxresponse.org](mailto:admin@rxresponse.org).

## Rx Response Director Awarded Outstanding Achievement Award at National Hurricane Conference

Rx Response Director Erin Mullen, RPh, PhD, CEM, was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award for Preparedness at the National Hurricane Conference in New Orleans earlier this year.

Mullen was recognized for her work in transforming Rx Response from a concept to a fully operational disaster preparedness and response program that encompasses the entire bio-pharmaceutical supply system, from manufacturers to distributors to dispensers.



Rx Response Director Erin Mullen (center) receives the Outstanding Achievement Award for Preparedness at the National Hurricane Conference in New Orleans, LA. Presenting the award to Mullen are National Hurricane Center (NHC) Director Rick Knabb (right) and former NHC Director Max Mayfield.

In accepting the award before hundreds of attendees at the National Hurricane Conference, Mullen said, "I'm proud to accept this award on behalf of a large team of professionals and experts across the entire bio-pharmaceutical supply chain who collectively make Rx Response such a valuable program."

Mullen was presented the award by National Hurricane Center (NHC) Director Rick Knabb and former NHC Director Max Mayfield. Mullen also said, "Rx Response epitomizes public-private sector coordination and stands as a best practice for other industries who seek to ensure that their vitally important products get to consumers when disaster strikes."

## Deadly Coronavirus/H7N9 Influenza Strain on Rx Response Radar Screen

As federal healthcare officials continue to carefully monitor H7N9 and the MERS-Coronavirus, Rx Response is stepping up its monitoring of the two deadly strains.

The emerging threats underscore the importance of bio-pharmaceutical companies refreshing and testing their business continuity plans as a further spread of either virus could have a potentially large impact on a company's workforce.

Rx Response will proactively monitor both viruses and will continue to work with partners such as CDC, ASTHO, and NACCHO to further pandemic planning. Rx Response played an important role during the 2009/2010 H1N1 pandemic in boosting the role of community pharmacists in what became the largest vaccination campaign in human history.

## Rx Response Coordinating Body Member Profile

The Rx Response Coordinating Body (CB) has functioned as the operational arm of Rx Response that includes a representative from each sector of the bio-pharmaceutical supply system. The Coordinating Body convenes during emergencies to provide a coordinated response during disasters and meets quarterly to help set priorities for Rx Response.

As Rx Response transitions into a 501(c)3 organization (see separate article on 501(c)3 transition), the Coordinating Body will be replaced by a Board of Directors. Bob Billings, Senior Vice President Finance, Planning & Special Programs for the Generic Pharmaceutical Association (GPhA), has been a long time member of the Coordinating Body. Billings will begin a well deserved retirement this summer but will remain an advisor to GPhA, which will have a representative serving as a founding member of the Rx Response 501(c)3 Board of Directors.



Bob Billings

Billings shared his views about Rx Response and his experience in the bio-pharmaceutical industry in a recent interview.

### **Q. What role does GPhA play within Rx Response?**

**A.** Since GPhA member companies manufacture the drugs that

fill 80 percent of the prescriptions in the United States, we play a critical role in enabling Rx Response to perform its mission of helping get medicine to patients in times of disaster. Our members can share information with us about their facilities in disaster impacted areas and report any problems they're encountering within the supply chain. GPhA can quickly share this information with Rx Response who in turn can immediately notify the right federal or state officials about any problems our members are having. Plugging the manufacturing facilities behind 80 percent of the prescriptions dispensed in this country into such a rapid problem-resolving communications channel is our core contribution and one we are proud to make.

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

**A.** Well, I think there have been a couple of significant benefits. The first has been the opportunity for our manufacturers to have a significant role in making sure medicine gets to patients during a time of crisis. The second has been an increase in the attention paid to business continuity planning by our members.

I know that in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, we sent out a call to our members asking them to let us know if they were having any problems. Almost every company responded and while most indicated that they had no real impact, there were a couple of reported problems. One company was having difficulty receiving a shipment of active pharmaceutical ingredient and we were able to provide that information to Rx Response who passed it along to the appropriate officials. Without question, Rx Response has been instrumental in heightening the awareness of our member companies about our civic duties to help ensure the flow of medicine.

As proud members of Rx Response, we have profiled our participation with Rx Response in our Annual Reports for the past two years. We look forward to continuing to support the vital mission of this program.

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

**A.** I've been involved in the pharmaceutical industry for nearly 20 years with most of that time spent on the generic pharmaceutical side of the business. My first foray into the sector was as the editor of Generic Line for FDA News. I also served as editor of another newsletter which covered the FDA's Division of Drug Marketing, Advertising and Communications. My two beats at FDA News were generic drugs and brand advertising. I then went to work for Apotex, a generic pharmaceutical company headquartered in Toronto. I worked from their Ft. Lauderdale office and I handled government affairs and assisted in new product selection. I then went to work for

Mylan Pharmaceuticals as their Director of Government Affairs, and later served as their Vice President for Industry Relations. In 2007, I started consulting for GPhA and did this for about two years when they offered me a full-time position as their Vice President of Policy. I was excited to take on this role.

**Q. How do you see Rx Response's pending 501(c)3 status impacting the future of the program?**

**A.** I think this move will absolutely be a benefit. It opens up channels for contributions that may not have been open before. For instance, some of our member companies have Foundations that are in the business of financially supporting worthy organizations. I think this is a smart move by Rx Response that will help ensure the longevity of this critically important program.

## Rx Response Steps up Media Presence Following Launch of New Website

With Rx Response Director Erin Mullen receiving an Outstanding Achievement Award at the National Hurricane Conference (NHC) in New Orleans, Rx Response officials decided to take advantage of the expected large media turnout to extend the program's recent media surge. Rx Response had already gotten a major boost following Hurricane Sandy when extensive media coverage of *Rx Open* quadrupled traffic to the Rx Response website.



The Weather Channel's Jim Cantore interviews Rx Response Director Erin Mullen at the Rx Response trade booth at the National Hurricane Conference in New Orleans.

A media briefing was held at the NHC to unveil the new branding for *Rx Open* and *Rx on the Run* (see related story on page 3 of newsletter) and The Weather Channel's Jim Cantore accepted an invitation to interview Mullen for a piece scheduled to run just before the start of peak hurricane season. Palm Beach Post reporter Eliot Kleinberg also interviewed Mullen and ran a feature story on Rx Response based on this interview. It is available at

<http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/weather/hurricanes/group-uses-technology-to-get-drugs-to-seniors-after/W6r4/>

In addition to engaging with traditional media, Rx Response recently unveiled a new website that has also served as a platform for stepped up social media activity. The updated website includes a new blog that provides timely commentary on topics of the day and an active Twitter feed. You can follow Rx Response on Twitter at [@RxResponse](https://twitter.com/RxResponse).

Follow us on:



## Making the Rounds

Rx Response continues its active outreach throughout the emergency management and public health community with a host of presentations, briefings and panel discussions at key conferences and meetings throughout the U.S.

### National Hurricane Conference



March 2013 — While at the National Hurricane Conference to receive her Outstanding Achievement Award, Rx Response Director Erin Mullen spent some time at the Rx Response trade booth, making a number of

important contacts and answering questions about the program. In the photo above, Mullen talks with Dennis Dura, Assistant Director, Office of Emergency Management, at the New Jersey Department of Human Services. Dura's agency was very involved in Hurricane Sandy response and Dura was eager to learn more about Rx Response.

### Healthcare Distribution Management Association's (HDMA) Distribution Management Conference

March 2013 — Rx Response Director Erin Mullen facilitated "Emergency Preparedness: A Hurricane Sandy Tabletop Exercise" with speaker Nikhil Natarajan, New York State SNS Coordinator for the Public Health Preparedness Program, NY State Department of Health. The presentation explored after-action insights gleaned from the response, focusing on efforts at the local and state emergency management level to remove logistical barriers and deliver medicines and supplies to the ravaged areas of NY and NJ.



### **NACCHO's Public Health Preparedness Conference**

March 2013 — Erin Mullen presented an educational poster that provided an overview of *Rx Open* and other Rx Response services while also participating in a number of workshops pertaining to pharmacy and pandemic planning. The theme of this year's conference was "Strengthening Public Health and Healthcare Preparedness through Innovation, Integration, and Implementation." One key session focused on lessons learned from responses to Hurricane Sandy. Another panel addressed, "What Sandy Taught Us about Hospital Evacuation and Healthcare Preparedness."

### **FEMA National Business Emergency Operations Center (NBEOC) Tabletop Exercise**

April 2013 — As part of its ongoing coordination with key federal agencies, Rx Response participated in this spring's tabletop exercise coordinated by FEMA's National Business Emergency Operations Center. Walgreens and Target also participated which enabled even broader input from the bio-pharmaceutical supply chain. Rx Response's Erin Mullen and Emily Lord talked about the value of *Rx Open* and the importance of business recovery. Other topics addressed included post disaster credentialing and the importance of developing standardized information needs before disaster strikes so national and regional businesses can plan for the multiple information requests they'll likely receive from government officials.

### **Barometer Bob Radio Talk Show**

May 2013 — As part of Rx Response's stepped up media outreach, Erin Mullen appeared on the Barometer Bob Radio Show to talk about the program and its response to Hurricane Sandy. Mullen also promoted *Rx Open* and *Rx on the Run*, urging listeners to make use of these resources before and after disasters. The host of the Barometer Bob Show, Robert Brookens, received a Distinguished Service Award at this year's National Hurricane Conference. Mullen's interview with Brookhaven can be heard at [www.RxResponse/News.com](http://www.RxResponse/News.com).

### **IOM Preparedness Meeting**

June 2013 — Erin Mullen participated in the Institute of Medicine's workshop focusing on families and children, including children with special healthcare needs. A focus for the workshop was leveraging existing partnerships and organizations to improve outcomes for pediatric patients in a disaster. Increasing accommodations for pediatric patient needs in local and state emergency response plans was also discussed. A special focus on resilience and recovery highlighted best practices already being employed specifically for children, with a further discussion of successful recovery strategies.

### **2013 Public Health Preparedness Conference, Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' Center for Emergency Response and Terrorism**

June 2013 — Rx Response's Emily Lord provided attendees an overview of Rx Response and how state and local officials in Missouri can liaise with Rx Response before and after disasters. The conference addressed lessons learned from recent emergencies and the impact of disasters like Hurricane Sandy on public health.

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Pharmacy Podcast Interview**

July 2013 — Erin Mullen will be the featured guest on an upcoming podcast produced by PharmacyPodcast.com, a popular podcast primarily serving independent community pharmacy owners. The appearance will present an important opportunity for Mullen to reach out directly to thousands of independent pharmacy owners, educating them about Rx Response and their important role on the front lines of public health resiliency. Mullen's podcast will be available at [www.PharmacyPodcast.com](http://www.PharmacyPodcast.com) in mid-July.

### **3rd Annual Building Resilience through Public-Private Partnerships Conference**

July 23–25, 2013 — Rx Response will participate with more than 300 attendees from the public and private sectors to promote innovation in furthering public-private partnerships across the homeland security enterprise. The event takes place at Rutgers University and is sponsored by DHS headquarters, in partnership with FEMA, the U.S. Northern Command and Rutgers University's department of supply chain management.

### **Houston Regional Healthcare Preparedness Symposium**

Oct. 16–19, 2013 — Erin Mullen will be attending this collaborative symposium alongside healthcare professionals, first responders, and emergency management officials to better prepare the healthcare community to respond to public health emergencies or disaster events, including terrorist attacks.

6