



# Rx Response Report:

Fall 2010 Update

## Rx Response Receives Partners in Preparedness Certificate of Recognition from International Association of Emergency Managers

The International Association of Emergency Managers has awarded Rx Response a Certificate of Recognition as part of its 2010 Awards program that recognizes excellence throughout the emergency management and public health community. Rx Response was nominated for the 2010 IAEM-USA Partners in Preparedness Award, which recognizes programs or processes that demonstrate innovative, multi-participant involvement between governmental entities and private sector businesses, non-governmental organizations/non-profits, or individuals. To win an award or receive a Certificate of Recognition, an organization must demonstrate effective and efficient incident management, emergency management or homeland security processes. While Rx Response did not win the top award, it was one of only two recipients of the national Certificate of Recognition presented by IAEM.

“We’re very proud to be honored by the IAEM with a Certificate of Recognition,” said Rx Response Director Erin Mullen. “This award demonstrates that our professional peers recognize the important contribution Rx Response is making in enhancing disaster resiliency in the United States.”



## 5th Year Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina Places Spotlight on Rx Response as a Premiere Public Health Lessons Learned from Katrina Disaster



As the nation marked the 5th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina in August 2010, emergency managers and public health officials looked to Rx Response and its efforts to enhance communication and collaboration in the nation’s biopharmaceutical supply system as one of the critical public health innovations prompted by the disaster.

Rx Response’s inspiration arose from a key lesson taught by Katrina: the lack of a single point of contact between public health officials and the biopharmaceutical supply system hindered effective communication and coordination. In some cases, shipments of medicine were not allowed past security checkpoints which delayed the availability of medicine for patients. In other instances, efforts by public health officials to learn about the status of medicine shipments and supply required dozens of phone calls to individuals who did not always have the necessary information. With many pharmacies closed in the immediate aftermath of Katrina, this became an even more frustrating obstacle.

"During a disaster, it is vital that systems are in place to assist with the continued delivery of medicines to hospitals, healthcare providers and patients in need," said Chris Singer, Executive Vice President of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA). "Among the necessary systems are established channels that will allow fast communication between the right parties in both public health and emergency management and within the biopharmaceutical supply system.

**Rx Response** provides this previously unavailable channel and in doing so has become an invaluable new tool for our nation's emergency managers and public health professionals who share the same goal with the biopharmaceutical supply system which is to help patients during times of crisis."

Collectively, the members of **Rx Response** donated millions of dollars in cash and large quantities of medicine to the people impacted by Katrina.

### **Members of Biopharmaceutical Supply Chain Faced Unique Obstacles in Katrina**

Each **Rx Response** member faced their own unique challenges leading up to and immediately following Hurricane Katrina. The members of the Healthcare Distribution Management Association (HDMA) distribute 85% of all pharmaceuticals sold in the United States to more than 165,000 dispensing locations. Many of these companies took a number of steps prior to Katrina's landfall to better prepare for the disaster. "Our members were able to rely on their emergency plans and local experience to prepare their response," said Perry Fri, HDMA's Senior Vice President, Industry Relations, Membership & Education. "Within hours of the storm ending, distributors were in the affected areas serving their customers, while also supporting state and federal response efforts." Despite pre-storm efforts, such obstacles as security checkpoints and severe flooding had to be overcome to deliver medicines where they were needed. One HDMA member used helicopters to help resupply hospital pharmacies, which were struggling to treat patients in the post Katrina environment.

"A large amount of advanced planning allowed our members to continue the critical work they do every day – delivering medicines. With **Rx Response** in place, our ability to help an area recover from a disaster is even greater," said Fri. Among those facing the greatest challenges following Katrina were the pharmacies, hospitals and clinics that struggled to meet patient needs. Many community pharmacies relied on generator power to sustain basic operations. The absence of phone or internet access made processing prescriptions impossible in some cases. John and Wendy McKinney, husband and wife pharmacy owners and members of the National Community Pharmacists

Association (NCPA), started filling prescriptions three days after Katrina hit and the water receded. They hooked up a generator and placed a card table by the back door for people who needed prescriptions refilled. Their computers were up, but the phone lines weren't so filing claims was out of the question. "For 10 days, we didn't charge," said John McKinney. "We gave everybody a week's worth of medicine," Wendy said. "If you had a bottle and could tell us what you were on and needed it, and it wasn't a narcotic, it didn't matter what drug store the bottle came from."



Hospital officials learned a great deal as a result of Hurricane Katrina about the importance of pre-disaster planning in addressing the unique challenges a hospital will face in a hurricane. These challenges include decisions associated with evacuations and how to effectively manage an evacuation. Other challenges relate to ensuring that enough medications are on hand to meet patient needs until a hospital pharmacy can be re-supplied. "The incredible scale and devastation of Hurricane Katrina has spurred hospital leaders to take pre-disaster planning to a new level," said Rich Umbdenstock, president and CEO, American Hospital Association. "The lessons learned indicated a need for a cooperative approach that includes preparation and planning from local associates, supply distribution centers, as well as the federal stockpile. **Rx Response** has played a very important role in enabling the American Hospital Association to educate others in health care about the unique challenges facing hospitals in a disaster. This dialogue and collaboration has helped ensure that our member hospitals are better prepared to meet patient needs in future disasters."

For **Rx Response** Coordinating Body member BIO, **Rx Response** plays a particularly vital role for its members. "Our manufacturers produce biologic medicines, such as vaccines, which quite often require constant refrigeration as the medicine moves between the manufacturer to the distributor and ultimately from the pharmacist to the patient," explained

Phyllis Arthur, BIO's Senior Director for Immunizations, Immunotherapeutics and Diagnostics Policy. "This complexity makes it especially important that a resource like **Rx Response** be in place so that transportation logistics are addressed before a disaster."

**Rx Response** Coordinating Body member GPhA also welcomes the contribution **Rx Response** has made to helping ensure the flow of medicine to patients following a disaster. "Generic medicines account for a large percentage of the prescriptions filled in the United States," said Shawn Brown, GPhA Vice President of State Government Affairs. "This makes it extremely important to us to do all we can to ensure the sustainability of the supply chain during an emergency. One of the steps we can take on this front is to actively support **Rx Response** in helping to get medicine to patients in times of need."

The Katrina anniversary also afforded **Rx Response** members with the opportunity to reflect on the success of the Pharmacy Status Reporting tool, which has allowed **Rx Response** to report which pharmacies had re-opened following a disaster. The new reports gave public health officials first-of-its-kind status reports about a vital public health asset that had restored its service to the public. The reports also enabled emergency room physicians and American Red Cross Disaster Health Services workers to send people in need of prescriptions to available pharmacies. "In a major disaster, we have the potential to shelter thousands of people and many need prescriptions. Having access to information about open pharmacies helps Red Cross clients get timely access to life sustaining medications," said Dee Yeater, American Red Cross.

"The Pharmacy Status Reporting Tool enabled NACDS to identify which of its member pharmacies were operating in disaster-stricken areas so that patients impacted by the disaster could access pharmacy services. This unprecedented capability significantly enhanced the value proposition for **Rx Response**, not only directly with patients but with emergency management and public health officials," said NACDS President and Chief Executive Officer Steven C. Anderson, IOM, CAE. "As the face of neighborhood healthcare, pharmacy is a front-line healthcare provider, and NACDS is pleased to work with **Rx Response**."

"While Katrina commemorations lamented the loss of life and other adverse impacts from the storm, they also focused on the rebuilding that has taken place in New Orleans and the many other positive outcomes," said **Rx Response's** Erin Mullen. "Those of us who developed **Rx Response** can take pride in knowing that when the next disaster strikes, we will be able to help the affected community get back on its feet much faster by helping to get medicine to patients in need."

## Rx Response and HDMA Team Up for Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Seminar

As the H1N1 pandemic escalated across the United States in late 2009 and into 2010, **Rx Response** and its members were on full alert to help respond to the largest immunization campaign in human history. When the crisis abated, **Rx Response** and the Healthcare Distribution Management Association (HDMA) wanted to convene supply chain professionals, risk management experts and public health officials to review and discuss lessons learned from the H1N1 crisis. The Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Seminar, convened in July in Washington, D.C., was a success by all accounts, providing an excellent forum for public health officials and the private sector supply chain to focus on the lessons learned during the H1N1 crisis. The event also triggered discussions around how to build even greater collaboration between the public and private sector in future disasters.



Dr. Nicole Lurie keynotes HDMA and Rx Response's Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness seminar.

Dr. Nicole Lurie, Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), provided the seminar's keynote presentation. She thanked attendees for working with the federal government to respond to the H1N1 influenza pandemic as well as the Haitian earthquake relief effort. Looking back on the H1N1 influenza pandemic response, Dr. Lurie noted, "It is amazing what we collectively achieved."

Dr. Lurie highlighted what was learned during influenza pandemic response — from the need for flexibility to establishing partnerships and maintaining open lines of communication — and indicated that these lessons can extend to all hazard responses. She concluded that the federal government needs to continue to research supply chain issues to fine-tune future preparedness plans.



Following Dr. Lurie, the seminar featured several expert panels and presentations on a variety of preparedness topics.

On the seminar's first day, a panel of public officials, including Sue Anderson of Infrastructure Protection at the Department of Homeland Security and Nitin Natarajan of the Office of Preparedness and Emergency Operations at HHS, focused on how the public and private sectors can effectively work together to respond to a crisis. **Rx Response** Director Erin Mullen served as the panel's moderator.

On the second day, Greg Burel of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Jennifer Sinibaldi of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO); Greg Stalnakar of 3M; Chris Alverson of McKesson; and Denny Murray of Walgreens discussed the challenges and successes surrounding the distribution of antivirals and medical products during the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic.



(L-R) Panelists Greg Burel, Jennifer Sinibaldi, Greg Stalnakar, Chris Alverson and Denny Murray discuss the challenges and successes surrounding the distribution of antivirals and medical products during the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic.

Rounding out the program was a panel on preparedness issues in the commercial supply chain, featuring Patrick DeGrace of Hospira Worldwide; Dr. Greene Shepherd of the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy; Angie Thomas of Cardinal Health; and Victor Vercaemen of SuperValu Pharmacies. Each panelist spoke to their preparedness planning experiences, identified challenges — from the manufacturer, distributor and retailer/dispenser perspective — and recognized the shared opportunities of continuing education for each segment and the benefits of coming together as a total supply chain to continue to communicate and plan for an unexpected crisis.

The seminar also featured several interactive roundtable discussions on topics ranging from the possibility of a New

Madrid Fault Line disaster, physical security issues for facilities, the challenges and logistics involved in the creation of a distribution system following the Haitian earthquake, a debrief on the H1N1 influenza pandemic, reimbursement issues in the retail sector, an overview of international risk issues and more.

Seminar co-sponsors HDMA and **Rx Response** acknowledged the support of a number of organizations for making the Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Seminar possible, including:

- Genentech, Inc., who served as the General Sponsor
- American Hospital Association (AHA)
- Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO)
- Generic Pharmaceutical Association (GPhA)
- Health Industry Distributors Association (HIDA)
- National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS)
- National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA)
- Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA)

## Role of Community Pharmacists in Administering H1N1 and Seasonal Flu Vaccines Deemed Major Success

In 2009, as the nation's public health community prepared to battle H1N1 with the largest vaccination campaign in human history, public health officials knew that community pharmacists could play a vital role in helping to administer an unprecedented amount of vaccinations.

**Rx Response** joined with the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) in August of 2009 to gather key stakeholders to develop a plan to engage community pharmacists in the vaccination campaign. This initial discussion led to an ongoing partnership which resulted in an ASTHO-published document that provided an operational framework for how public health agencies could partner with pharmacies in the vaccination campaign. This critical resource paved the way for accelerated engagement of community pharmacists in the public health vaccination campaign. In the end, community pharmacists collectively administered an estimated 14 million H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccinations.

As preparations advance for the 2010/2011 flu season, the recent NACDS Pharmacy and Technology Conference in San Diego, CA provided the perfect venue to continue the

discussion of the community pharmacy vaccination campaign and the lessons learned.

**Rx Response** helped facilitate the workshop that included important insight from NACDS, ASTHO, CDC and the American Pharmacists Association (APhA).



Alex Adams, Director of Pharmacy Programs for the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, addresses attendees of the HTN1 Community Pharmacy Vaccination workshop.

Alex J. Adams, PharmD, Director of Pharmacy Programs for NACDS, opened up the session and called the partnership between **Rx Response**, NACDS, ASTHO, and CDC an important example of public sector and private sector collaboration that enhanced public health during a national emergency. Adams called upon participants to identify ways to enhance the collaboration and look for new opportunities for the partnership to serve the public.

Lisa M. Koonin, MN, MPH, Senior Advisor at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, presented a report on the lessons learned from the CDC's Federal Pharmacy Initiative and discussed strategies for the upcoming flu season.

Dr. Paul E. Jaris, MD, MBA, Executive Director of ASTHO, reviewed ASTHO's role during the H1N1 vaccination campaign and presented a report on the insights gained from ASTHO's recent survey of state and local health departments and pharmacy representatives regarding collaboration during the pandemic. Many survey respondents placed importance on pharmacy's ability to serve as an accessible location for vaccines and expand the reach of the public health community.

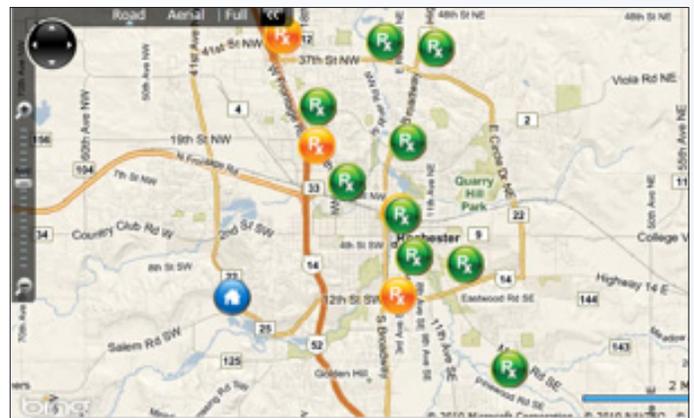
**Rx Response** Director Erin Mullen teamed up with Mitch Rotholz, RPh, MBA, Chief of Staff for the American Pharmacists

Association to facilitate a wide ranging discussion about the H1N1 vaccination campaign. Key topics addressed included the need to document success stories, build greater connections between community pharmacies and public health agencies, tackle reimbursement issues and expand community pharmacy's role in public health issues beyond influenza vaccinations.

"NACDS was pleased for the opportunity to further discussions with **Rx Response**, CDC and ASTHO on pharmacy and flu immunizations during our Pharmacy and Technology Conference," said NACDS President and CEO Steven C. Anderson, IOM, CAE. "Pharmacy is the face of neighborhood healthcare and NACDS looks forward to continued collaboration with industry groups to further enhance the role of pharmacy to help patients improve their health and reduce overall healthcare costs."

## Pharmacy Status Reporting Tool to be Enhanced to Show Location of Red Cross Shelters

The Pharmacy Status Reporting Tool has been one of the most innovative developments in the **Rx Response** program since the tool was created following the 2008 hurricane season. With an eye towards continuing enhancements, **Rx Response** and the American Red Cross (ARC) have teamed up to enable the mapping of open Red Cross shelters on the Pharmacy Status Reporting Tool. This new capability will help the public in a disaster-stricken area to know what shelters are open that are providing pharmacy services.

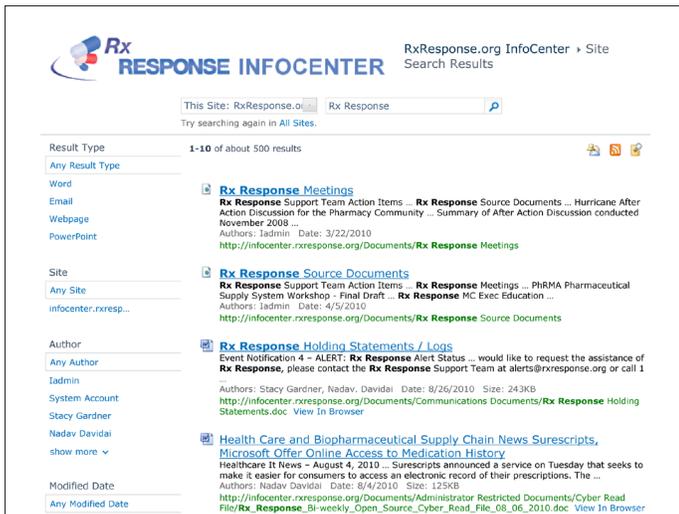


This sample Pharmacy Status Report depicts an ARC Shelter (represented by the blue icon) located near several pharmacies. Green icons represent open, billing pharmacies and orange icons represent pharmacies known to exist but whose operating status is unknown.



## Rx Response Enhances Functionality of Online Platform InfoCenter

InfoCenter has served as the online nerve center of **Rx Response** since its inception in 2008. Public web users interact with **Rx Response** through the public facing website [www.RxResponse.org](http://www.RxResponse.org) but the public health and emergency management community, as well as **Rx Response** Coordinating Body members, use a far more robust, secure access web portal at <http://infocenter.rxresponse.org>. This restricted site allows the posting of situation reports, product requests and other product information that help keep members of the biopharmaceutical supply chain and government officials on the same page when it comes to pharmaceutical issues associated with a major disaster.



InfoCenter is built on Microsoft's Sharepoint platform which allows users to share extensive data and other resources with a wide network of individuals located in geographically diverse areas. **Rx Response** has upgraded to Sharepoint 2010 which has enabled several enhancements to the <http://infocenter.rxresponse.org> website. Specifically, the upgraded platform enables enhanced content management and faster searches, and new graphical interfaces will make sections of the site more intuitive. "As technology allows, we will continue to ensure that InfoCenter remains robust in delivering relevant information to the right people as quickly as possible," said **Rx Response** Director Erin Mullen.

## Join Rx Response on LinkedIn and Twitter

As social media continues to expand as a vital tool of the public health and emergency management community, **Rx Response** is keeping pace with this change and enhancing its presence in the social media world. You can now follow **Rx Response** Director Erin Mullen on her own LinkedIn page, where important information about **Rx Response** is posted and updated on a regular basis. Simply log onto [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com), search **Rx Response** under "Companies" and Click on "Follow **Rx Response**". You may also invite **Rx Response** Director Erin Mullen to Link In with you.

**Rx Response** also uses Twitter as a communications tool during times of crisis to send timely updates to emergency managers and public health officials. You may join **Rx Response's** URL feed on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/rxresponse](http://www.twitter.com/rxresponse).

If you're not a member of LinkedIn or Twitter yet, join them today and become a part of the many groups on these sites that have helped bring the emergency management and public health community even closer.



## About Rx Response

**Rx Response** serves as an information conduit for the entire biopharmaceutical supply system to help ensure the continued flow of medicines during a severe natural disaster, large-scale terrorist attack or an influenza pandemic. This first-of-its kind program relies on a robust network that allows federal and state emergency management officials to communicate with **Rx Response** regarding biopharmaceutical needs and other issues which may impact the supply system. The communications are actively monitored by all segments of the biopharmaceutical supply system to ensure the fastest possible response to inquiries.

To learn more, visit [www.rxresponse.org](http://www.rxresponse.org) or call 866-247-2694.

### Rx Response Coalition Partners:

