



Recruitment for Health Care Provider Voluntary Participation: CMS Emergency Preparedness Resource Inventory (EPRI) Pilot

Emergency Preparedness for Every Emergency

Your Help is Needed!

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) would like to recruit a variety of health care providers to participate in an important emergency preparedness pilot project during October 2008. The pilot's purpose is to gather important information on the status of providers that are affected during an emergency.

Background

States across the nation regularly respond to disasters and local emergencies, such as floods, fires, tornadoes, snow storms, and hurricanes. This hurricane season -- especially as we respond to the damage caused by Gustav, Hanna and Ike, we remember the difficult lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina, as 175 miles per hour winds and the aftermath of levee breaches and floods caused massive destruction. National experts stressed that effective emergency planning must be implemented in a coordinated, collaborative and integrated process that involves all agencies -- local, State, Regional, Tribal and Federal agencies -- as well as private partners. Hurricane Katrina taught us that effective partnerships and response strategies must be well established and tested, engaging both public and private entities, to ensure the protection of our most vulnerable citizens.

The CMS, Survey and Certification Group launched a widespread emergency preparedness initiative to ensure the safety and well being of patients and residents in all health care settings: long-term care, acute care, and community-based care. In 2007, CMS issued instructions to the State Survey Agencies (SAs) to establish systems for tracking and reporting on the status of health care providers affected during an emergency. While some States, such as Alabama, Florida and New York, have already established well-developed systems for this purpose, most states have not. CMS has allowed additional time for SAs to implement these provider tracking systems, but expects the affected health care provider tracking and reporting capability to be in place by July 2009.

CMS EPRI Pilot Implementation

To assist States in this effort, CMS and the HHS Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) have implemented a pilot of the Emergency Preparedness Resource Inventory (EPRI) database. AHRQ's contractor, Abt Associates, has developed a template based on the CMS affected provider tracking and reporting requirements. AHRQ charges no fee to entities that download and utilize the EPRI database. Three States have volunteered to participate in the CMS EPRI Pilot: California, Nevada and Wisconsin.

The overall purpose of the EPRI pilot is to create a simple, user-friendly system that SAs may voluntarily use to effectively track information on the operational status of health care providers that have been impacted during an emergency (e.g., damaged, evacuated, closed). CMS needs this data to monitor and respond appropriately to health care providers' requests. The HHS Secretary also uses this important data to determine whether a public health emergency exists, and if needed, could result in the authorization of the section 1135 waiver process.



To ensure that health care providers are not required to enter data in to duplicate systems we are working with the HHS Office of Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response (ASPR) to develop compatibility with the National Hospital Available Beds for Emergencies and Disasters (HAvBED) system. The HavBED system tracks available beds and is a requirement under the ASPR Hospital Preparedness Program.

Health Care Provider Participation is Needed

CMS is asking for a variety of health care providers to volunteer and participate in the CMS EPRI Pilot. Your input as a health care provider is vital to ensure the CMS EPRI database is designed in a user-friendly manner, with successful testing results. We plan to begin testing the CMS EPRI database in late October 2008. CMS anticipates scheduling two teleconferences where health care providers will have the opportunity to review the current CMS EPRI database design, and give their feedback regarding any needed improvements. In addition, health care providers will be asked to participate in a brief data entry testing phase, to ensure successful results for the SA affected provider reports. Abt Associates helpdesk staff will be in regular contact with the three SAs and providers to help identify problems or barriers and provide technical assistance.

Evaluation Report

Following completion of the pilot, Abt Associates will issue an evaluation report, summarizing the results of the pilot, identifying any obstacles that occurred during the pilot, and make recommendations for any necessary improvements. This evaluation report on the CMS EPRI Pilot will be useful should other SAs throughout the nation like to implement the database. This report is targeted for issuance in December 2008.

If Interested, Contact Your State Survey Agency Representative

If you are interested in participating in the CMS EPRI Pilot and helping to design this important system, please contact your State Survey Agency representative listed below:

California	Nevada	Wisconsin
<p>Dan Kotyk, Chief California Dept. Health Services Emergency Preparedness & Disaster Response Section Licensing & Certification Program 1615 Capitol Avenue P.O. Box 997377, MS 3205 Sacramento, CA 95899-7377 Phone: 916-324-0134 E-mail: dan.kotyk@cdph.ca.gov</p>	<p>Mandi Galli, Management Analyst Nevada Dept. of Health & Human Services Nevada State Health Division Bureau of Licensure and Certification 1550 East College Parkway, Suite 158 Carson City, Nevada 89706 Phone: 775-687-4475 ext. 241 E-mail: mgalli@health.nv.gov</p>	<p>Alfred Johnson, Director Wisconsin Department of Health Services Division of Quality Assurance Bureau of Technology, Licensing and Education 1 West Wilson Street, Room 1150 PO Box 2969 Madison, WI 53707 Phone 608-266-2055 E-mail: Alfred.Johnson@dhfs.wisconsin.gov</p>