

# **Anticipate, Respond, Recover: Healthcare Leadership and Catastrophic Events**

## **PREFACE**

As we go to press with this book, media coverage of scientific knowledge gained over the past few years has increased our awareness of Earth changes. On December 20, 2010, The Associated Press wrote “2010’s World Gone Wild: Quakes, Floods, Blizzards,” calling 2010 “the deadliest year in more than a generation. More people were killed worldwide by natural disasters this year than have been killed in terrorism attacks in the past 40 years combined.” Through November 30, 2010 nearly 260,000 people died of natural disasters in 2010, compared to 15,000 in 2009, according to Geneva-based insurance giant Swiss Re (Bell and Borenstein 2010).

Andreas Schraft, vice president of catastrophic perils for Swiss Re, stated that “disasters from the Earth are pretty much constant,” and Craig Fugate, the director of the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) stated “It just seemed like it was back-to-back, and it came in waves” (Bell and Borenstein 2010). Even the extremes “are changed in an extreme fashion,” said Greg Holland, director of the earth system laboratory at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (Bell and Borenstein 2010). FEMA declared a record number of major disasters for 2010, 79 as of December 14<sup>th</sup>. The average year has 34 (Bell and Borenstein 2010).

Scientists and disaster experts agree that “the hand of man made this a particularly deadly, costly, extreme and weird year for everything from wild weather to earthquakes. The excessive amount of extreme weather that dominated 2010 is a classic sign of man-made global warming that climate scientists have long warned about” (Bell and Borenstein 2010). It was also a year of man-made technological catastrophes; all while the world’s population is moving to riskier megacities on fault zones and flood prone areas.

Every disaster and catastrophic event has a medical impact. Large-scale events can affect entire populations, and require a coordinated response among public health services.

It is the responsibility of healthcare executives to know as much about disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation as they know about healthcare finance, insurance, and medical staff credentialing. To trivialize or overlook this one component of education and knowledge can, in the blink of an eye, incapacitate a healthcare facility or delivery system, placing all in it in great jeopardy and danger. Let this be the year that you, the healthcare leader, become as prepared and aware as the CEOs and healthcare leaders who boldly participated in sharing their stories and enriching this book with their truth and insight.

## **HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANIZED**

This book is designed to be a quick read of the most important information a healthcare leader needs to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate disasters and larger scale catastrophic events. It is written in a simplistic fashion, to allow you to open the book to any section and garner nuggets of wisdom.

The book is divided into four primary parts:

- I. Introduction and Preparedness (Chapters 1-3)
- II. Response (Chapters 4)
- III. Recovery (Chapters 5-8)
- IV. Lessons Learned, Cases, and Real Life Experiences (Chapter 9)

Mitigation is a primary topic of this book, and is reflected throughout the chapters. A number of chapters in each part provide more detailed information on the topics covered.

## **PART 1**

This section describes disasters and catastrophes and introduces the healthcare leader to the organization of our nation for response to declared events. Whether local, state or federal level involvement is required, the processes for preparedness, response, and recovery are based on the National Response Framework. These chapters also describe preparedness planning, both internally and externally.

► **Chapter 1--Disasters and Catastrophes Defined.** Statistics illustrate that disasters are increasing in frequency and severity, concurrently increasing the risk to healthcare organizations. The conundrum of terminology is discussed and the impact of catastrophic events on healthcare and other related business entities is introduced.

► **Chapter 2--Organizing for Disasters.** It is important to understand the state and federal direction and roles in catastrophe planning. This chapter describes the roles of and relationships among the various federal guidance programs such as the National Incident Management System and the National Strategy for Homeland Security. The agencies that support this response, from the local to the federal level, are discussed.

► **Chapter 3--Preparedness Planning for Catastrophic Health Events.** Awareness of business crisis and continuity management principles is essential when you prepare your facility, internally and externally, for catastrophic events..Strengthening resilience and coalition building is critical to the sustainability of healthcare services.

## **PART II**

This section discusses the challenges faced by leaders when their organizations must respond to a disaster.

► **Chapter 4--Responding: You're In This Alone.** In this chapter, the authors and others who have led their organizations through catastrophic events share anecdotes about their challenges and offer leadership wisdom. Identifying and grooming disaster leaders, and having an awareness of the overwhelming number of internal issues that must be faced during a disaster, are critical to leadership preparedness. Don Smithburg has contributed "A Pocket Book Primer for the Executive: Ten Steps on Disaster Planning," which should prove of great value to healthcare leaders preparing for potential catastrophic events.

## **PART III**

This section describes the recovery phase.

► **Chapter 5--Recovery: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly.** Recovery in the aftermath of a critical event doesn't occur without proper and extensive planning and preparation. This chapter discusses recovery and sustainability, identifies resources, and reviews key internal issues that healthcare organizations need to address.

► **Chapter 6--Financial Planning for Catastrophic Events**

► **Chapter 7--Financial Actions During and After the Catastrophe**

These chapters provide an in-depth review of the importance of solid financial planning for catastrophic events. Building awareness of employee roles, estimating costs, and providing adequate coverage to insure such an event are initial steps. Chapter 7 covers financial actions to activate recovery and protection of the facility and its operations.

► **Chapter 8--What's In Our Future?**

This chapter provides an overview of challenges we may be facing in the near future concerning Earth changes--their impact on populations and on the provision of healthcare. The literature is flush with scientific articles and data from credible sources warning of the increasing tempo and destructive potential of disasters and catastrophic events. The challenges facing our profession are vast, and continuity of care among healthcare providers is fully the responsibility of the healthcare CEO and governance leaders. There is time to prepare for future catastrophic events, if we heed the clear warnings and remain knowledgeable of the threats. Changing an organization's culture is one of the most difficult tasks facing healthcare leaders; developing a "disaster culture" within your healthcare organization is the most valuable gift a leader can provide. The time to begin is long overdue.

## **PART IV**

The final part of this book consists of lessons learned from those who managed their organizations through a variety of disasters. Their "real world" experiences provide exceptional advice to current and future healthcare leaders. From CEOs and healthcare leaders of large urban

medical centers to university-based systems to not-for-profit and for-profit environments, these leaders share their timely messages and wisdom to encourage preparedness at all stages.