

Katrina and Rita's first responders weigh in on experiences and future planning

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APHA Panel Presentation: Service Needs and Experiences
After Hurricane Katrina
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**Children's
Health Fund**



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- (1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose

CHF Mission Statement

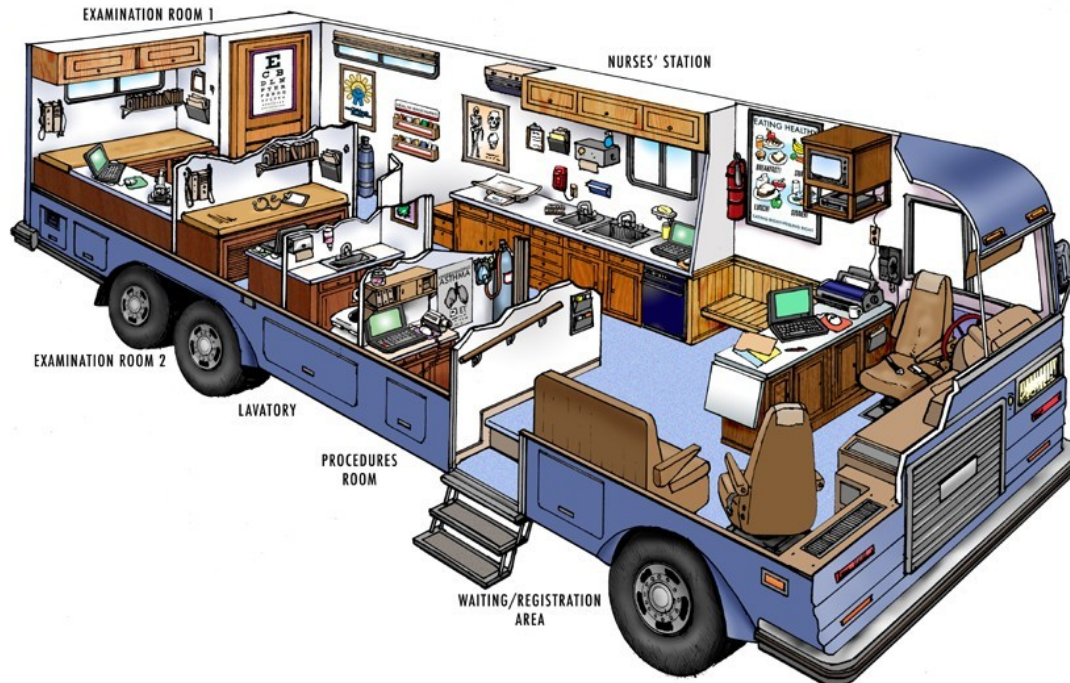
- The Children's Health Fund (CHF) is committed to providing health care to the nation's most medically underserved children and their families through the development and support of innovative primary care medical programs, response to public health crises, and the promotion of guaranteed access to appropriate health care for all children.



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The Mobile Medical Unit





Operation Assist

- Initiated as a disaster recovery effort in response to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, Operation Assist (OA) has evolved into a comprehensive program with clinical, public health, policy and advocacy components – working together to address the needs of affected populations and to contribute to ongoing disaster preparedness and response throughout the United States.
- OA is a collaborative effort between The Children’s Health Fund (CHF) and the National Center for Disaster Preparedness (NCDP) at the [Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University](#).



Preparedness Considerations

- Legal
 - Credential certification
 - Licensure
 - Malpractice coverage
 - State variance
- Logistical
 - Pharmacy
 - Staffing
 - Transportation
 - Knowing local resources
- Communications (Inter-organizational and Intra-organizational)
 - Chain of command
 - Knowing resources (communication technology)



Background

- Competency requirements and training protocols for disaster preparedness are neither consistent across institutions nor states
- Hospitals and pharmacies outside of areas hit hard were often able to provide some legal and resource-oriented support to response efforts
- Efficacy of institutions such as FEMA and the Red Cross were reportedly varied



Background

- Noted barriers to care:
 - Access to care
 - Supply of pharmaceuticals
 - Communication difficulties (logistical- and language-)
 - Lack of patient healthcare information
 - Lack of insurance



Study Design

- Qualitative
- Semi-structured telephone interviews with physician first responders
- Conversations recorded via audiotape with verbal consent
- Interviews transcribed and evaluated for major themes

Study participants



- Physician staff member (n=12) in CHF's National Network
- Participation in OA effort
- Service in LA or MS post-hurricanes



Responses: Previous experience

- Disaster relief training/preparation
 - Particular trainings (2)
 - No trainings, but related exposure(4)
- Prior disaster response experience (3)
 - Helpful? (3/3)

Responses: Initial thoughts/concerns

- Chaos/poor coordination (5)
- Mental health needs/issues (3)
- Violence (2)
- Chronic care needs (3)
- Pharmacological needs (2)



Responses: Specific clinical

- Preexisting mental health issues (2)
- Preexisting medical health issues (2)
- Exacerbated health problems
 - Dermatological (3)
 - Respiratory (3)
 - Acute care (3)
 - Mental health (3)
 - Chronic health problems (2)



Responses: Interagency Collaborations

- Red Cross

- No presence or interaction (3)
- Communication with RC was satisfactory (2)

- FEMA

- No presence or interaction (4)
- Indirect presence (2)

- Salvation Army

- No presence or interaction (3)



Responses: Barriers

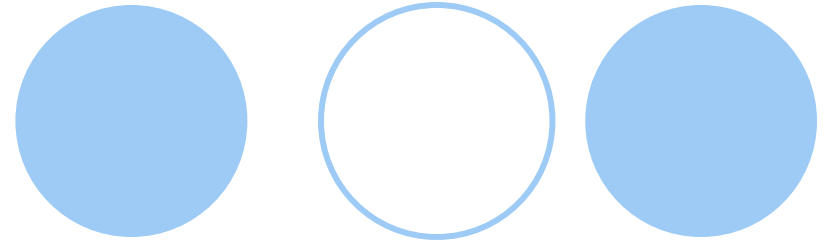
- Mental health needs (3)
- Continuity (3)
- Correct medication (4)
- Subspecialty care access (3)
- Communication (4)



Responses: Staffing & supplies

- Adequate staff (7)
 - Identified needs
 - Social worker
 - Community resource/liason
- Adequate supplies (6)
 - Identified needs
 - Community resources
 - Pharmacy
 - Vaccines

Study limitations

A decorative graphic at the top left of the slide. It features the text "Study limitations" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The text is partially overlaid by two light blue circles. The first circle is solid and positioned behind the word "Study". The second circle is an outline and positioned behind the word "limitations".

- Limited information about study participants
- Small N
- Bias

Lessons Learned

- Disaster relief training/preparation is helpful to post-disaster primary care providers
- Management of preexisting medical & mental health conditions is a post-disaster priority and challenge
- Coordination of interagency efforts is important & lacking post-disaster



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