



After-Action Meeting

North Central Wisconsin

Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition

Introduction

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Cyberattack & Utility Failure

Virtual Tabletop Exercise



Purpose and Scope

Purpose:

The purpose of this exercise is to enhance preparedness by noting strengths and areas of opportunity associated with response to a cyber-event across the region.

Scope:

The North Central Wisconsin HERC will be exercising the response and recovery capabilities of its coalition partners due to a cyberattack.



Primary Objectives

- **Objective One:** Identify redundant communication modalities for conveying altered operational capabilities to community partners.
- **Objective Two:** Discuss business continuity practices and identify mechanisms by which local healthcare facilities can continue to provide mission essential functions.
- **Objective Three:** Discuss the prioritization of services to be restored and what would be required to restore the facility to normal operations.



Areas of Opportunity

- Need for ground-up Business Continuity Planning (BCP).
- Lack of integration with existing BCPs and Disaster Recovery Plans (DRP).
- Reconstitution of services and IT applications.
- Redundant means of communication.
- Outsourced IT Departments being remote.
- Provision of care without technology.



Strengths

- Strong Emergency Operations Plans (EOP) to initiate response, supported by utility plans.
- Good community partnerships within healthcare community.
- Regular back-up of EMR information.
- Redundant means of communication.
- Home Health patients have an Emergency Plan completed upon admission.



Improvement Plan

- Development of detailed unit/department-specific mission essential functions into a BCP.
- Share needs and priorities of clinical units and support functions with that of the DRP.
- Increase frequency of IT involved exercises, to include clinical care staff.
- Identify resources for just-in-time training of nursing staff with critical biomedical failures.

Family Assistance Center

Full-Scale Exercise



Purpose and Scope

Purpose:

The purpose of this exercise is to establish a community-based Family Assistance Center due to a large fire in the community resulting in a number of fatalities.

Scope:

This full-scale exercise was conducted May 9, 2019 at Grace Rhinelander Foursquare Church. Exercise participants will be conducting response and recovery operations in support of the community through the establishment of a Family Assistance Center.



Primary Objectives

- **Objective One:** Determine which community partners would be responsible for establishing a family assistance center, who would be responsible for determining the location, and what would be the scope of operations.
- **Objective Two:** Evaluate how healthcare partners coordinate/communicate location of patients during a mass casualty incident to the family assistance center to facilitate the process of reunification.
- **Objective Three:** Assess the process for establishing a Joint Information Center (JIC) amongst community partners to communicate the available resources and location of the family assistance center.
- **Objective Four:** Review the resources within the immediate community (and region) for providing emotional and spiritual care to families, friends, and the community after a major incident. This would include the process for providing death notifications to next-of-kin.



Objective One

Determine which community partners would be responsible for establishing a family assistance center, who would be responsible for determining the location, and what would be the scope of operations.

- **Strength 1:** There was a wide range of local, county, and regional partners that participated in the exercise and played an active role in Family Assistance Center operations.
- **Strength 2:** Inclusion of faith-based partners provided a wealth of resources. These partners offered a physical location for the FAC, as well as a staff of mental health and spiritual care professionals to assist with interviews and notifications..
- **Strength 3:** Despite the rural location of the region, there was a significant number of partners involved in the set-up, execution, and operations of the Family Assistance Center.
- **Area for Improvement 1:** Define the role of EMS in a FAC.



Objective Two

Evaluate how healthcare partners coordinate/communicate location of patients during an MCI to the Family Assistance Center to facilitate the process of reunification.

- **Strength 1:** Local responders and emergency management were able to streamline communications by maintaining coordination with 9-1-1 operators as well as the 2-1-1 non-emergency assistance service.
- **Strength 2:** The FAC's comprehensive reunification forms expedited the staff's ability to locate and reunify victims with their families.
- **Strength 3:** In the event family members could not reach the FAC in person, a call center was established to allow family members another avenue to locate their loved ones.



Objective Two Continued...

Evaluate how healthcare partners coordinate/communicate location of patients during an MCI to the Family Assistance Center to facilitate the process of reunification.

- **Area for Improvement 1:** Improve intelligence gathering and analysis to enhance the victim reunification process.
- **Area for Improvement 2:** Re-evaluate the flow of operations in the FAC.
- **Area for Improvement 3:** Improve operational communication and coordination within the FAC.



Objective Three

Assess the process for establishing a Joint Information Center (JIC) amongst community partners to communicate the available resources and location of the family assistance center.

- **Strength 1:** All the right partners were participating in this exercise including law enforcement, hospitals, fire, emergency management and public health, among others. These partnerships are critical for efficiency of the FAC operations.
- **Strength 2:** Participants demonstrated an excellent understanding of the Incident Command System in order to facilitate communications between various community responders, and formation of a Joint Information Center.
- **Strength 3:** Multiple counties within the region were represented during this exercise, including emergency management, public health, human services, local police and county sheriff. These are all the right entities to involve in pulling all the resources together as well as establishing a JIC.
- **Area for Improvement 1:** Coordination with the 2-1-1 Service.



Objective Four

Review the resources within the immediate community (and region) for providing emotional and spiritual care to families, friends, and the community after a major incident. This would include the process for providing death notifications to next-of-kin.

- **Strength 1:** The resources for emotional and spiritual care were outstanding. Many observed that the staff worked with the families empathy created a calming environment
- **Strength 2:** By partnering with the faith-based and mental health community partners, there was a skilled team of professionals available at the FAC.
- **Strength 3:** Staff at the FAC were versatile and able to deal with families with different backgrounds. For instance, one family member was autistic and required additional assistance, and staff were able accommodate appropriately.



Objective Four Continued...

Review the resources within the immediate community (and region) for providing emotional and spiritual care to families, friends, and the community after a major incident. This would include the process for providing death notifications to next-of-kin.

- **Strength 4:** Staff were quick to identify individuals experiencing medical concerns and coordinated with EMS quickly.
- **Area for Improvement 1:** The rooms used for death notifications and spiritual / emotional support soon became identified as where people are taken to be told of their death of their loved one. After the notification they were taken back through the FAC in front of other families. Improve death notification process.



Improvement Plan

- Meet with EMS agency leadership to determine appropriate expectations for EMS staffing the FAC.
- The forms used to gather information were lengthy and at various stages of the FAC operations repetitive.
- Determine clear handling of the information on the forms so that basic information can be entered a shareable document (such as an excel spreadsheet) and reviewed at predetermined intervals.
- A team of people should be dedicated to attempt to locate the loved one as soon as possible, either by calling area hospitals or comparing data collecting to look for similarities / duplicates.



Improvement Plan

- Provide at least two working phone lines that ideally are landlines, in any available office space for calls to be fielded and handled. Call takers should be provided with forms and scripts of what to say and instructed on how to handle callers that may need additional assistance (a ride to the FAC), or how to handle those that sound as if they may harm themselves.
- If possible, staff the FAC with people that ideally have social work or spiritual care backgrounds and assign them to family members that present to assist in warm handoffs of the family member to the next station, provide essential information, reassurance to the family and a way to track where the family is in the process at the FAC.



Improvement Plan

- Work closely with leaders at the 211 service in order to understand how the 211-service works, as well as procedures for notifying 211 of activation and location of the FAC, and guidance to the operators on what they should tell the callers.
- Determine what the expectations for 211 is; would they normally be gathering missing persons names / caller names and phone numbers and routing it to the FAC, or simply instructing the caller to go to the FAC?
- Reconsider how that person/family will leave the FAC following death notification to provide them with privacy while not upsetting others that are waiting for word on their loved one.



Thank You!

Christopher Sonne, CHEC

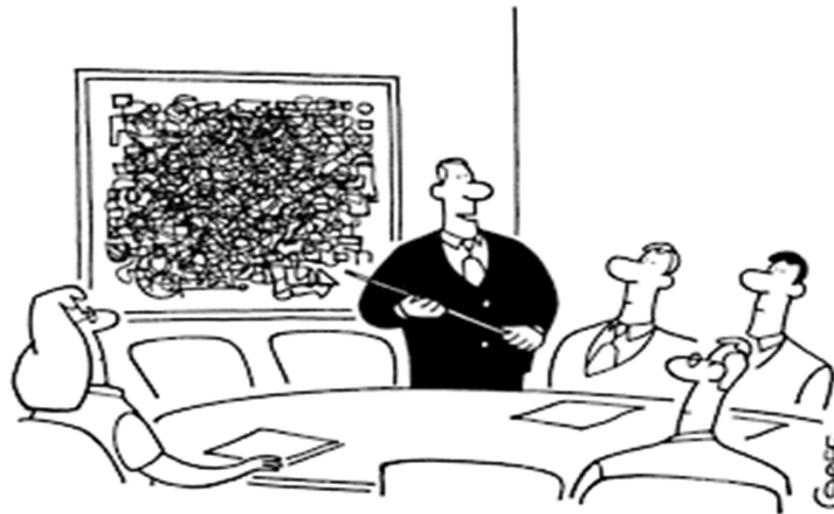
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"And that's our plan. Any questions?"

