

Public Health Emergency
Preparedness Exercise

Are We Ready?

Exercise Objectives

- This exercise is designed to test the relationships between the medical office's emergency preparedness plan and the actual operational implementation of the plan.
- Exercising—to test the response capabilities between staff members in a medical clinic or office environment and identify strengths as well as areas for improvement (i.e., evaluation).
- Planning—to address issues that may occur and how one might be able to be better prepared.
- Training—to train responsible personnel in critical jobs that will be involved in a medical surge response and, in doing so, help strengthen the ties between them (i.e., relationship building).

Rules of the Exercise

- The facilitator will present a series of options.
- Participants are encouraged to offer their ideas about what should be done.
- All comments should be considered for their feasibility.
- Many participants may know things about their particular work and working environment that no one else does.
- Encourage all to contribute.
- Have a note taker to record all the ideas for further refinement.
- Please note that the numbering of the questions in this presentation corresponds to the “Medical Surge Exercise Results” Form (included).

Expectations

- Every medical office of any size can be better prepared for an extended medical surge event.
- Open and honest dialog and feedback are encouraged throughout the exercise.
- Participants should feel free to ask questions of one another and challenge each other's assumptions.
- You will act on what you learn.

SCENARIO

- Public Health authorities have alerted the public about a severe outbreak of a novel, highly contagious, strain of influenza.
- Your average patient load has doubled and some of your staff are out sick or home caring for their family. The number of phone calls has tripled as patients want to know what they should do (both those who are symptomatic and the worried well).

QUESTION

- What strategies is the office prepared to implement under these circumstances?

Office Surge Strategies

The literature suggests that there are several basic strategies for dealing with a surge of patients. Please Answer YES or NO regarding the options on the following slides that may be used in your office.

For those strategies in which the answer is YES, **please describe** how they would be implemented.

Who? What? Where? Why? When? = HOW.

1.) Modification of Routine Operations

- Delay and/or deferral of routine office visits (e.g., cancel annual physicals).

NO

YES: Please describe in the hard copy included with this packet

- Extension of office hours (opening earlier, remaining open later).

NO

YES: Please describe in the hard copy included with this packet

1.) Modification of Routine Operations

- Modification of office hours to segregate and concentrate any perceptibly infectious patients to defined time slots to minimize secondary infection.
 - NO
 - YES: Please describe in the hard copy included with this packet

- Implement collaborative agreements/understandings with other medical offices, including cross-staffing arrangements.
 - NO
 - YES: Please describe in the hard copy included with this packet

- Other strategies which may be employed

2.) Chain of Command

- Who is “in charge” of the office during an “emergent” situation?
- Who determines the appropriate roles, responsibilities and necessary actions?

3.) Communications

- How will the office “surge strategy” or general emergency procedures be communicated to staff?
- How do you anticipate receiving information regarding the surge event? (e.g. radio, county health office, etc.)?

4.) Triage

Some possible triage strategies include the following suggestions. For those strategies that may be used, please describe how they would be implemented.

- Use phone triage to identify patients who need home care or emergency care, vs. those who should be seen in your office or other non-urgent facility.
 NO YES: **Please describe in the hard copy included with this packet**

- Use separate waiting areas and triage evaluation areas for patients who have symptoms of infectious disease.
 NO YES: **Please describe in the hard copy included with this packet**

- Use a triage coordinator to manage patient flow.
 NO YES: **Please describe in the hard copy included with this packet**

- Other strategies our clinic may use for surge triage

5.) Infection Control

- *When* and *how* do you address the issue of staff protection and patient protection (e.g., personal protective equipment) and segregation?

6.) Human Resources

- You may be able to estimate staff availability for emergency response through the following suggestions:
 - Identify clinical staff with conflicting professional or personal commitments;
 - Identify staff with distance and other barriers that limit their ability to report to the clinic;
 - Identify staff that are likely able to respond rapidly to their clinic.

Human Resources (Continued)

7.) What is the minimum number and type of staff necessary to maintain office operations (i.e., remain open to the public)?

8.) Has or will the office engage in cross-training of staff where feasible?

NO YES: Please describe in the hard copy included with this packet

9.) If conditions require the closure of the office, is there a plan to share available staff with other centers of care?

NO YES: Please describe in the hard copy included with this packet

Other

10.) Other surge strategies which may be used by this office (not noted in previous slides)?

- Try to think of anything that may be a unique challenge to your office or patient population.

The End?

- No. Health Preparedness Planning is a continuous effort, but you have made good progress by completing this exercise.
- Please be sure to review all the decisions you came up with and write them on the included hard-copy or CD-ROM template.
- By finishing this exercise you should be able to identify a priority list to help your clinic become better prepared.
- Act on it!

Wrap up

- After completing the exercise, please send a copy of the MEDICAL SURGE EXERCISE RESULTS (INCLUDED) to us via USPS (Pre-paid return envelope included) or e-mail to msmp@msmp.org, or by fax to 503-222-3164.
- This exercise should be repeated at least annually or after major changes in staffing.

**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR CONTINUED
HEALTH
PREPAREDNESS
EFFORTS**