



Development of Standards and Guidelines for Healthcare Surge during Emergencies

Declaration and Triggers

DECLARATIONS & TRIGGERS

I. Description

Identify:

- Triggers, declarations, and emergency orders to move from the standard delivery of healthcare to surge status, as well as the scaled return to normal operations after a surge event; and
- Roles and responsibilities of those involved in surge planning and response.

II. Outputs

Surge Triggers, Declarations & Emergency Orders

1. Establish a matrix that maps surge levels (e.g., red, orange, yellow) to specific incident levels accompanied by a relevant definition list. The surge levels will trigger response protocols necessary at each specific level. Develop training for planners to inform them of the response protocols associated with each surge level.
2. Using existing healthcare legislation, standards, and pre-existing guidelines for the flexing of certain healthcare regulations, identify a list of triggers that flex current standards at each surge level and list authorities and/or operational tools responsible for enacting triggers. The decision to activate a trigger may be made by a culmination of actions as reflected in a check list, and may not be strictly limited to the discretion of an individual. Create a plan to communicate trigger implementation, as well as reconstitution to standard operational procedures. The plan may include a checklist that indicates trigger initiation and the required degree of action, as well as a template to assess surge response activities as it relates to the reconstitution of normal operations and the reversal of triggers.
3. Create flowcharts to illustrate the trigger implementation and related stakeholder communication. Additionally, develop a plan and checklist for consistent delivery of messages. Develop standard declarations and dissemination formats related to the initiation and escalation of triggers to be issued during a surge event, as well as declarations for the reversal of surge declarations and the return to standard operations.
4. Assess pre-existing emergency orders to provide an understanding of what could be enacted. Conduct a gap analysis of the current assessment to the optimal requirements and develop draft templates for emergency orders to implement during a surge event.

Chain of Command

5. Develop organizational charts of the chain of command to reflect the flow of information and interactions across the chain. The organizational chart should include individuals/positions and at what point in the chain of command that a trigger is activated or deactivated. This will allow the stakeholders to have an increased awareness of those they will be interacting with during a surge event, as well as increase accountability. List operational criteria for a chain of command during a surge event so that the chain of command has pre-surge knowledge of how/what to do during a surge, as well as an understanding of the other individuals involved in the response. Develop training curriculum and exercise outlines pertaining to the roles and responsibilities of the chain of command.
6. Create a skills matrix mapped to the roles and responsibilities required in the chain of command, and develop a succession plan to increase resiliency and efficiency during a surge. The succession plan should identify the key functions of the chain of command and document the roles of individuals who are to carry out key surge response functions including required competencies, processes employed, and interdependencies. Additionally, the succession plan should include potential replacement candidates for the chain of command.

III. Issues

Surge Triggers, Declarations, and Emergency Orders

1. What are the levels of disaster and triggers for the implementation of surge standards and guidelines?

DECLARATIONS & TRIGGERS

2. How is trigger activation and deactivation communicated during a surge?
3. Are there pre-existing declarations and emergency orders that can be issued as needed during a surge event?
4. What pre-planning is involved prior to a surge related to declarations?
5. What are the levels of disaster recovery that trigger the return to normal operations?

Chain of Command

1. What is the chain of command at the facility level?
2. How is the chain of command communicated prior to a surge?
3. How do the chain of command and trigger owners communicate during a surge?