



HEALTHCARE EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE COALITION  
*of Palm Beach County*

Community Report  
2015

# + MISSION: *To develop and promote the healthcare emergency preparedness, response and recovery capabilities of Palm Beach County, Florida.*

## + PURPOSE

- Provide a forum for the healthcare community to interact with one another and other response agencies at county, regional, and state levels to promote emergency preparedness.
- Coordinate and improve the delivery of healthcare emergency response services.
- Foster communication between local, regional, and state entities on community-wide emergency planning, response and recovery.
- Ensure overall readiness through coordination of community-wide training and exercises.
- Promote preparedness in the healthcare community through standardized practices and integration with other response partners.

## + HERC BACKGROUND

HERC is a network of acute and sub-acute care hospitals, county emergency response agencies, and community disaster partners. The Coalition collaborates on planning, training and exercising for an area-wide health and/or medical response to a disaster or incident.

After the events of 9/11 and the anthrax incident in Palm Beach County the following month, the County enacted a mock drill to determine what the capabilities and gaps were in the community's emergency response system. The drill brought together 15 hospitals, municipal and county law enforcement, EMS/fire rescue, HAZMAT, The American Red Cross, and other regional responders. The outcome revealed that individual agencies could not act alone to effectively address a disaster or public health emergency. In 2001, with support from Palm Healthcare Foundation, HERC was formed.

Operationally, HERC has a formal structure, with bylaws, specific strategic planning goals, regular meetings and scheduled activities that are planned and managed.

### Some of HERC's Key Activities include:

- Joint Hazardous Vulnerability Analysis
- HSEEP Compliant Exercises
- Multidisciplinary Training
- Standardized Response Guidelines
- Interoperable Communications
- Patient Tracking Mechanisms
- Syndromic Surveillance
- Mutual Aid Agreements

### 2015 HERC Officers:

Chair: Ashley Lee, Delray Medical Center  
Vice Chair: Al Grasso, Florida Health in PBC  
Treasurer: Brenda Atkins, Wellington Regional Medical Center  
Secretary: Lisa Andrews, Delray Medical Center

### Past HERC Chairs:

Brenda Atkins, Wellington Regional Medical Center  
Michael Self, VA Medical Center  
Rebecca Creighton, Delray Medical Center  
Mary Russell, Boca Raton Regional Hospital:  
Robbin Lee, JFK Medical Center:  
Bill Farrell, St. Mary's Medical Center

### HERC Member Organizations:

American Medical Response  
American Red Cross  
Bethesda Health  
Boca Raton Regional Hospital  
Caridad Center  
Community Health Center of West Palm Beach  
Delray Medical Center  
Florida Health in Palm Beach County  
Good Samaritan Medical Center  
Health Care District of Palm Beach County  
JFK Medical Center  
Jupiter Medical Center  
Kindred Hospital  
Lakeside Medical Center  
MyClinic of Jupiter  
NuVista Living  
MorseLife  
Palm Beach County Association of EMS Providers  
Palm Beach County Division of Emergency Management  
Palm Beach County Fire Rescue  
Palm Beach County Medical Society Services  
Palm Beach County Sheriff Office  
Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center  
Palms West Hospital  
Select Specialty Hospital  
St. Mary's Medical Center  
VA Medical Center  
Wellington Regional Medical Center  
West Boca Medical Center  
West Palm Hospital



### HERC Trusted Partners:

Florida Atlantic University  
Florida's Blood Centers  
Florida Health (Regional Special Needs Shelters)  
Fresenius Medical Care  
Jerome Golden Center  
Martin Health System  
Nova Southeastern University  
Palm Beach County Medical Reserve Corps  
Palm Beach County School District  
Palm Healthcare Foundation  
South Florida Hospital & Healthcare Association  
St. Lucie County Medical Center

# + TRAINING & EDUCATION

Training opportunities for HERC members have offered a variety of topics pertinent to HERC's mission. This impressive diversity of trainings was the result of extensive networking by the HERC Training Committee. Numerous training opportunities for HERC members were available during the period, some of which included the following:



**Local Mitigation Strategy** – hosted by HERC at the Trauma Hawk Hangar, provided by the PBC Division of Emergency Management, March 2015

**Intermedix HICS WebEOC Demo** – hosted by the PBC Division of Emergency Management, provided by HERC, March 2015

**Fatality Management Training**- hosted and provided by HERC at the Trauma Hawk Hangar, May 2015

**Hazard Vulnerability Assessment Training** - hosted and provided by HERC at the Trauma Hawk Hangar, June 2015

**The Health Care Public Information Officer's Role in Disasters** - hosted and provided by HERC at the Trauma Hawk Hangar, August 2015

**ASPR TRACIE (Technical Resources Assistance Center and Information Exchange)** – hosted and provided by HERC at the Trauma Hawk Hangar, September 2015

\* Healthcare partners are also sent a list of additional diverse training opportunities by County and Regional Emergency Management on a monthly basis.

# + DRILLS & EXERCISES

## **Statewide Hurricane Exercise (May, 2015):**

The exercise provided the opportunity for process integration into Emergency Support Function (ESF) 8 Health/Medical operations in response to a natural disaster, continuing weather impacts, and traffic incidents. As well, the Full Scale Exercise (FSE) facilitated the strengthening of coordination of information sharing and resources within the Healthcare Coalition, between local governments, state, and healthcare facilities. This exercise was used for healthcare facilities to test internal core capabilities in responding to a widespread natural disaster



## **Florida State Water Sector Workshop and Functional Exercise (November 2015)**

The purpose was to conduct a water sector-focused Functional Exercise (FE) that provided an opportunity to test emergency response capabilities, specifically but not limited to: communications, resource management, documentation, and mutual aid and assistance. This FE focused on Palm Beach County with a goal of developing an exercise template and improvement planning goals that can be a model for all other counties in Florida.



## 2015 Tangible Cost

Annual Membership Dues	\$500
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Trainings (listed above):	\$273,000 / 30 = \$9,100
Exercises:	\$50,000 / 30 = \$1,666
	<hr/> \$10,766
Return on Investment: = (Gain from Investment - Cost of Investment)	
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	(Cost of Investment)
	= \$10,766 - \$500
	-----
	500

For every \$1 spent for member dues, \$20.53 was returned.



**Intangible Cost Savings:** Priceless



# HERC ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2015

1. HERC created a business plan that will assist in its efforts of becoming sustainable. The Coalition will provide consultation and training to healthcare organizations and other coalitions to assist with their emergency preparedness initiatives.
2. Completed County and Regional Hospital Vulnerability Assessment (HVA).
3. Acquired \$227,500 in disaster related grants for HERC and/or its member organizations. Major funder was the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR).
4. Participated in over 28 hours of disaster preparedness trainings and exercises.
5. HERC is an integral part of Florida's Healthcare Coalitions State Workgroup whose function is to develop recommendations for the design, structure and purpose of Healthcare Coalitions in the state.
6. Held an Annual Disaster Preparedness Recognition Dinner.
7. Participated in weekly roll calls and for 2015 had an 90% response rate. Acute Care Hospitals also participate in bed availability reporting drills through EMResource, HAVBED and NDMS, in addition to reporting as requested during exercises.
8. Situational Awareness is also a key function of HERC as all hospitals participate in ESSENCE, a syndromic surveillance system.
9. Hospitals also receive alerts from the FUSION Center and Epicom. Lessons learned from actual events are shared at monthly HERC meetings.
10. Updated HERC Strategic Plan



## FORM YOUR OWN HERC

### HERC Book

*Establishing a Healthcare Emergency Response Coalition* by Jay Lee, Thomas W. Cleare, and Mary Russell available for purchase.

Link: <https://rowman.com/ISBN/978-1-60590-680-5>

If you have any specific questions please contact John James at [johnj@pbcms.org](mailto:johnj@pbcms.org) or visit [www.pbcms.org/herc](http://www.pbcms.org/herc).



### ESTABLISHING A HEALTHCARE EMERGENCY RESPONSE COALITION



Jay Lee, Thomas W. Cleare, and Mary Russell

Special thanks to our funding partner:



HERC is a program of:

