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.

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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.

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### 2015 Tangible Cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Membership Dues</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainings (listed above):</td>
<td>$273,000 /30 = $9,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercises:</td>
<td>$50,000 /30 = $1,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return on Investment:</td>
<td>$10,766</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
\text{Return on Investment: } \frac{(\text{Gain from Investment} - \text{Cost of Investment})}{\text{Cost of Investment}} \]

\[
= \frac{10,766 - 500}{500} \]

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

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### 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.


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


If you have any specific questions please contact John James at johnj@pbcms.org or visit www.pbcms.org/herc.

Special thanks to our funding partner:

ASPR

HERC is a program of:

Palm Beach County Medical Society Services