

Lessons from Hurricane Florence Jan. 7 Meeting Summary

NCHA held a meeting at New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington on **January 11** to discuss impacts and lessons learned from Hurricane Florence. Participants from CarolinaEast Health System, Carteret Health and New Hanover Regional Medical Center reported on the challenges they faced from the storm and their responses. Using Accreditation Standards, they categorized their challenges, many of which fell into the areas of communication, resources and distribution, and staff responsibilities. State officials also presented, describing the Federal and State disaster response infrastructure, and a review they are now conducting with Crisis Focus. Two feedback sessions remain, and nearly 300 survey responses will be assimilated into their after-action report.



A summary of the topic areas and ideas gathered from the meeting for inclusion in follow-up reports and activities include:

- Identifying and meeting patient flow challenges exacerbated by a long duration storm:
 - Understanding the terms “evacuation” and “decompression”
 - Family considerations in patient movement
 - Partnering with other healthcare providers to plan to meet the needs of long-term care, dialysis and community residents that do not require hospital level care.
- Advancing partnerships and tools for collaboration in staff sharing.
- Use Human Resource practices to address staff related needs.
- Specialized transportation strategies are needed to address prolonged flooding.
- Evaluation and deployment of communication tools like WebEOC, satellite phones.
- New community-based partnerships should be developed with pharmacy, durable medical equipment and other related businesses.

Thanks to New Hanover Regional Medical Center for hosting and to the North Carolina Hospital Emergency Management Council for their assistance in holding this meeting. Presentations from the meeting can be found at <https://www.ncha.org/event/lessons-from-hurricane-florence/>.

Health Systems' staff with Healthcare Preparedness, Response, and Recovery responsibilities are invited to join the Council by contacting Jason Zivica, Director of Emergency Preparedness & Business Continuity at Duke University Health System at jason.zivica@duke.edu or Mike Vicario at mvicario@ncha.org.