

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Building Response Capability

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Department of Veterans Affairs



VA'S MISSIONS

- Care
- Benefits
- National cemeteries
- Federal support--Department of Defense, DHS/Federal Emergency Management Agency and others during times of war or national emergency.
 - 1982 PL 97-174 VA-DOD Contingency Hosp Sys
 - 1987 VA joined FEMA, HHS and DoD in establishing NDMS
 - 1989 FRP VA responsibilities for several ESFs #8
 - 2002 VA Emergency Preparedness Act
 - 2006 Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act
 - Public health emergency language
 - Permits VA to assist non-Veterans (42 USC)



- **Comprehensive Emergency Management Program**
 - Dr. Paul Kim, Acting Director
 - Mission: provide expertise and leadership for the VHA enterprise through the integration of emergency management programs, functions, and supporting activities to prevent, protect, mitigate, respond and recover from all hazards.
 - Vision: to create a resilient and prepared healthcare system in an all hazards environment, serving as a national model.
 - Field programs—Regional & Area Emergency Managers; Medical Center & National Disaster Medical System support
 - Response programs—NDMS & VA's Disaster Emergency Medical Personnel System (DEMPS)



VHA FIRST RECEIVERS DECONTAMINATION PROGRAM

- Program required at all facilities with Emergency Departments or Urgent Care Clinics (141)
- Course
 - Based on regulatory requirements
 - Pre-course work
 - Train the trainer format
 - 3 days—didactic & practical including an exercise
 - Workgroup includes subject matter experts; comprehensive review every 3 years
 - Continuing Education Units provided
 - Offered regionally
 - If space available, outside organizations may attend



CHALLENGES

- Perception of risk
 - Release for training & individual preparation
- Aging health professional workforce
 - Nurses, others?
- Need for continual training
 - New graduates, turnover
- Willingness, ability and intention to respond
- Understanding all-hazards preparedness



OPPORTUNITIES

- VAMCs—many have core teams for all-hazard preparedness
- Medical Reserve Corps, Citizens Corps
- National Guard/Reserves
- Healthcare coalitions
- Public health emergency preparedness concepts/training
 - Elementary
 - Secondary
 - College health professional schools—interprofessional