

# Hospital Preparedness Program

## Success Story Template

To help the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) better tell the story of its impact and the successes of awardees, HPP is collecting success stories from around the country. Information from these stories may be used in publicly distributed or available materials, such as HPP's website.

This template helps **HPP awardees** (states, territories, freely associated states and select municipalities) gather and organize content to build their success stories more easily. This template is not mandatory; it is a resource to guide authors through the process of capturing salient information.

### General guidelines:

- Use this template as a guide to stimulate ideas. ***Don't worry about answering all the questions.***
- Tell a story. You're writing for your reader – the general public, who may have little to no knowledge of HPP. When capturing success stories, ask yourself, "What do I want my reader to think, do, or feel after reading my story?"
- Gather the key facts about your program or response and think about answering the "who, what, where, when, why, and how" questions in relation to your story. Most importantly, think about what would make this activity, incident and/or response important to your reader.
- Start gathering facts as soon as you can after the incident/response. You can still share your story even if your program or strategy is in an early stage. Showing positive results through all phases of a program are helpful.
- Work with healthcare coalitions (HCCs) and public information officers to get more information when you can.
- Capture quotes and points of contact when possible. Quotes provide color to your story, and you may want to reconnect with someone involved with the response at a later date.
- Please submit completed form at your earliest convenience to [hpp@hhs.gov](mailto:hpp@hhs.gov). If you capture photographs or video related to your activity, incident, and/or response that may be used in ASPR materials, please email the materials or the link to them.

<b>REPORT INFORMATION - EXAMPLE</b>	
Date of incident (Month, Year): June 2013	Location (city, county, or state): Colorado
Incident Type: Natural Disaster	Point of Contact: Traci Pole
Healthcare Coalition or Member: Rio Grande Hospital	Submitting Date: September 2014
<b>INCIDENT</b>	<b>DESCRIBE THE INCIDENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What prompted the response?</li> <li>• Approximately how many people were affected?</li> <li>• Was a state or local emergency declared?</li> <li>• Why was this incident significant?</li> </ul>	<p>June 2013 brought the worst wildfires in Colorado history, scorching hundreds of square miles of forests, destroying homes and enveloping towns in thick, black smoke. In rural southern Colorado, the San Juan Mountains had experienced years of drought and a pine-killing beetle infestation that made the area prone to wildfire. Soon after fires started in the region, they quickly spread to about 100 square miles. The mayor of South Fork, an affected town, estimated that 1,000 to 1,500 people were forced to flee.</p>

CHECK THE CAPABILITIES INVOLVED IN THE RESPONSE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Healthcare System Preparedness <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare System Recovery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emergency Ops Coordination <input type="checkbox"/> Fatality Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Sharing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medical Surge <input type="checkbox"/> Responder Safety and Health <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Management
RESPONSE	DESCRIBE THE RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Staff:</b> Which coalition members (or other groups) took part in the response? How was staff notified? How was staffing addressed? Describe the specific role of each responder type. Was staffing adequate? What shortfalls existed?</li> <li>• <b>Plan:</b> Was there a specific response plan followed? If so, describe the plan. What was the goal of the response? Whom did coalitions serve? What strategies did coalitions use? How did coalition members share resources? Was a communications plan in place between coalition and leadership of emergency management and state health departments? Was the State Emergency Operations Center or Public Health Emergency Operations Center opened? Was there a federal public health/medical liaison there?</li> <li>• <b>Activities:</b> Describe activities related to surge capabilities. What activities did coalitions undertake? Consider which healthcare preparedness capabilities were addressed. Were patients evacuated? If so, how/why were those decisions made and how did you track the patients? Did you work with the media? Were family members notified? How were the access and functional needs of at risk individuals addressed? What activities, if any, were taken before the incident that helped mitigate the impact of the incident?</li> </ul>	<p>As the West Fork Complex fire raged in the southwestern part of the state, Rio Grande Hospital activated its emergency operations center for the first time. The event marked the first time the hospital had enough interoperable emergency communications equipment to allow command team to stay informed of all activities going on around them.</p> <p>The emergency operations center used HPP-funded interoperable communications systems, including 800 MHz radios and an 800 MHz consolette for radio dispatch operations) to track the fires and their impact on regional clinics in the towns of South Fork and Creede, CO. This allowed the Incident Command Team to stay informed of all activities, including the eventual decisions to evacuate the clinics, and to relay information to first responders and emergency department staff, so they were better prepared to deal with medical surge.</p> <p>Emergency room personnel also relied on the hospital's preparedness plans – which guided drills and training over the years - to handle the surge in the demand for medical services brought by the fires. Using the new consolette, they were able to use information from first responders to adjust and prepare for the surge.</p>

OUTCOME	DESCRIBE THE OUTCOME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did the healthcare coalition and/or its members improve the ability to respond? How did the HCC manage recovery and continuity of operations?</li> <li>• What short- and medium-term outcomes resulted from the response? Cite specific evidence (data, descriptions, anecdotes, or quotes), where possible.</li> <li>• Describe your most important result at the participant, program, community, or coalition level, considering the healthcare preparedness capabilities.</li> </ul>	<p>As the Chief Executive Officer of Rio Grande Hospital stated, “The information allowed the hospital emergency operations team to plan and react much more quickly than would have been possible otherwise. We couldn’t have purchased this equipment on our own and it arrived just when we really needed it.”</p>
HPP’s/PHEP’s CONTRIBUTION	DESCRIBE HPP’s/PHEP’s CONTRIBUTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did HPP funds directly or indirectly support preparation for this kind of incident?</li> <li>• Did the focus on HPP/PHEP capabilities help planning and response efforts? How so?</li> <li>• What HPP-supported resources were requested during the response? How well did the request process work?</li> <li>• Did the state need to redirect HPP funds to assist in the response? If so, how much?</li> <li>• What role did local/regional HCC emergency coordinators play?</li> </ul>	<p>Healthcare coalitions in Colorado used HPP funding to develop plans and purchase equipment to improve monitoring and communications in the event of a disaster. The Rio Grande Hospital, a small rural hospital, had incorporated wildfires into their risk assessment. With HPP funding, the hospital invested in redundant, interoperable communications systems, including 800 MHz radios and an 800 MHz consolette. These tools would allow staff to monitor wildfires and the impact on the local healthcare system. Rio Grande Hospital also developed evacuation procedures for its main facility and associated clinics.</p>

LESSONS LEARNED	DESCRIBE LESSONS LEARNED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What worked? What gaps did the incident reveal in healthcare preparedness?</li> <li>• What structural or external challenges did responders encounter?</li> <li>• What changes will your healthcare coalition consider in future responses, and how will they be made?</li> <li>• If there was a federal role, how can it be improved?</li> </ul>	<p>The interoperable emergency communications system worked exactly as planned and helped the hospital emergency operations team to plan and react much more quickly. As a small hospital, the Rio Grande Hospital could not have purchased the critical equipment on its own; HPP was instrumental in ensuring that the hospital had the resources it needed to respond to this disaster.</p> <p>Planning and exercises contributed to Rio Grande Hospital staff's ability to prepare for and implement medical surge.</p>
<b>OTHER COMMENTS</b>	
<p>Add any additional comments about the incident, response, or lessons learned here.</p>	
<b>LIST POINTS OF CONTACT</b>	
<p>Please provide contact information for follow-up questions about this story. It can be your contact information or that of a local/coalition member involved in the event.</p> <p>HPP_program_officer@LocalAgency.com</p>	

## Tips and Resources

### Tips for Collecting/Writing Success Stories and Incident Reports

- Create a **plan** or system for collecting stories, including communicating the purpose of collection.
  - Identify staff responsible for collecting, organizing, analyzing, and writing stories.
  - Establish timelines that allow for reviews and revisions by relevant stakeholders.
  - If your office has a team member who focuses on fundraising efforts, engage this person to look for stories they share with potential donors and stakeholders.
- Use a **template or standard** form to guide (but not strictly dictate) the story.
- Know who your **audience** is and communicate the issues that matter to the audience.
- Identify a clear **purpose** for the success story before writing (i.e., what do you want the audience to think or know? What actions do you want to flow from reading this story? Why is this story important?)
- Tell a **story** (i.e., do not just string together facts and figures).
- Ask **open-ended questions**. **Listen** carefully and ask **follow-up questions** as needed.
- Secure **permission** to attribute quotes, images, or information.
- **Check facts** against other sources.
- Request **other resources** for information.
- Ask for opportunity to **follow-up** with questions in future (and obtain contact information).
- Thank the person for their time and share a copy of the final story once completed.

### Writing Tips (from the CDC's "How to Develop a Success Story")

- Keep paragraphs short – no more than three to four sentences.
- Keep the story to no more than two pages.
- Stick to the facts. Do not interject an opinion unless you attribute it to someone.
- Avoid using passive voice (e.g., "Trainings were provided."). Use active voice (e.g., "X partner provided Y trainings."), and be clear about who is doing the action in every sentence.
- Include direct quotes if they strengthen the story.
- Limit the use of acronyms. If you use acronyms, spell them out on first mention.
- Use plain language. (See <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/wordsuggestions/simplewords.cfm>)
- Avoid jargon. Readers often skip over terms they don't understand, hoping to get their meaning from the rest of the sentence.
- Keep messages simple and concise.

### Resources

- "How to Develop a Success Story," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, available at [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/stories/pdf/howto\\_create\\_success\\_story.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/stories/pdf/howto_create_success_story.pdf)
- "Impact and Value: Telling Your Program's Story, Lessons Learned from the Division of Oral Health and Its Partners," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007, available at [http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/library/pdf/success\\_story\\_workbook.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/library/pdf/success_story_workbook.pdf)
- "10 Tips for Writing an Effective Success Story," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, available at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Documents/SuccessStoryTips.pdf>
- "Medical Surge Capacity and Capability Handbook: A Management System for Integrating Medical and Health Resources During Large Scale Emergencies," Department of Health and Human Services, 2004, available at <http://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/mscc/handbook/Documents/mscc080626.pdf>