WHEN DISASTER STRIKES, IS YOUR HEALTHCARE COMMUNITY READY?

After a major disaster, individuals can be displaced not only from their homes but also from their primary care providers and local hospitals. Sometimes they leave behind needed medications, and almost always lack pertinent medical records. Patients in affected regions may be referred to alternative care locations, and individuals who sustain injuries must be triaged and treated appropriately. Providers and first responders who are treating these individuals at field locations often work with incomplete medical information.

WHAT IS PULSE?

The Patient Unified Lookup System for Emergencies (PULSE) is a nationwide health IT disaster response platform that can be deployed at the city, county, or state level to authenticate disaster healthcare volunteer providers. PULSE allows disaster workers to query and view patient documents from all connected healthcare organizations.

National interoperability connectivity has reached a breadth and maturity where it can be leveraged in new ways, such as disaster response. PULSE is a public-private collaborative that includes HHS, ASPR, ONC and state agencies to support Americans in times of disaster.

-- Mariann Yeager, CEO, Sequoia Project
NEVER MISS A BEAT

HISTORY OF PULSE

PULSE was originally conceived by the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) for Health IT following Hurricane Katerina. Well-meaning physicians and providers flocked to shelters to help, but there was an inability to confirm medical credentials of these volunteers or access health records of evacuees. In late 2014, ONC and ASPR received a joint HHS Ventures award, through its innovative IDEA Lab, to lay the foundation for PULSE. The award provided for a PULSE pilot in California through the development of a detailed use case, technical architecture, and an evaluation of policy considerations. Ultimately, PULSE can be made available in any geographic area to support healthcare professionals and first responders caring for displaced individuals or volunteer healthcare workers who are deployed to a disaster area outside of their normal health IT environment.

“We are sharing the early lessons from California and the CA-HIE to develop a template for other city, county, and state governments. We encourage all jurisdictions to come forward and join PULSE to be better prepared to deliver healthcare during and after a disaster.”

-- Robert “Rim” Cothren, Executive Director of California Association of Health Information Exchanges (CA-HIE)

WHO IS GUIDING PULSE?

Audacious Inquiry
California Emergency Medical Services Authority (CalEMSA)
California Association of Health Information Exchanges (CAHIE)
Dignity Health
Georgia Regional Academic Community Health Information Exchange (GRACHIE)

Health and Human Services (HHS)
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR)
The Sequoia Project
Texas eHA
Texas Health Services Authority

Learn more about PULSE evaluation criteria and view a demo, visit sequoiaproject.org/PULSE

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