

The Howard County Healthcare Coalition is comprised of three key partners – Howard County Emergency Management, Regional Health Services of Howard County Hospital and Regional Health Services of Howard County Public Health. In addition, we are adding community partners, such as nursing homes, businesses, fire departments, law enforcement, sanitation, etc. Our purpose is to design and implement emergency preparedness and hospital preparedness programs.

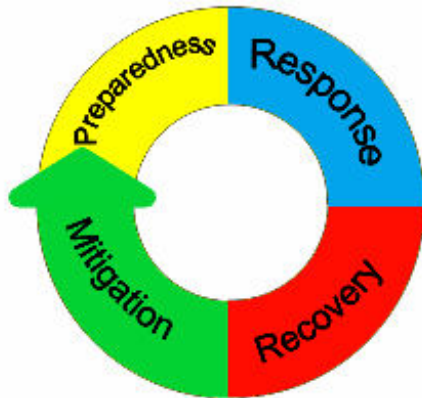
We work to implement the following preparedness capabilities:

- Community Preparedness – prepare for, withstand, and recover – in both the short and long terms – from public health incidents. Preparedness is "a continuous cycle of planning, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating and corrective action in an effort to ensure effective coordination during incident response".
- Community Recovery – collaborate with community partners to plan and advocate for the rebuilding of public health, medical and mental/behavioral health systems to at least a level of functioning comparable to pre-incident levels, and improved levels where possible. It encompasses both short-term and long-term efforts for the rebuilding and revitalization of affected communities.
- Emergency Operations Coordination – direct and support an event or incident with public health or medical implications by establishing a standardized, scalable system of oversight, organization, and supervision.
- Emergency Public Information and Warning – develop, coordinate and disseminate information, alerts, warnings and notifications to the public and incident management responders.
- Fatality Management – coordinate with other organizations to ensure the proper recovery, handling, identification, transportation, tracking, storage, and disposal of human remains and personal effects; certify cause of death; and facilitate access to mental/behavioral health services to the family members, responders, and survivors of an incident.
- Information Sharing – conduct multijurisdictional, multidisciplinary exchange of health-related information and situational awareness data among federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal levels of government, and the private sector.
- Mass Care – coordinate with partner agencies to address the public health, medical, and mental/behavioral health needs of those impacted by an incident at a congregate location.
- Medical Countermeasure Dispensing – provide medical countermeasures in support of treatment or prophylaxis to the identified population in accordance with public health guidelines and/or recommendation.
- Medical Materiel Management and Distribution - acquire, maintain, transport, distribute, and track medical material during an incident and to recover and account for unused medical material, as necessary, after an incident.
- Medical Surge – provide adequate medical evaluation and care during events that exceed the limits of the normal medical infrastructure of an affected community. The goal is rapid and appropriate care of the injured or ill from the event and the maintenance of continuity of care for non-incident related illness or injury.
- Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions – recommend to the applicable lead agency and implement, if applicable, strategies for disease, injury, and exposure control (isolation and quarantine, travel advisor/warnings, social distancing, etc)
- Public Health Surveillance and Epidemiological Investigation – create, maintain, support and strengthen routine surveillance and detection systems and epidemiological investigation

processes, as well as to expand these systems and processes in response to incidents of public health surveillance.

- Responder Safety and Health – protect public health agency staff responding to an incident and the ability to support the health and safety needs of hospital and medical facility personnel if requested.
- Volunteer Management – coordinate the identification, recruitment, registration, credential verification, training, and engagement of volunteers to support the jurisdictional public health agency's response to incidents of public health significance. The goal is to use volunteers to augment incident operations.

The Howard County Healthcare Coalition plays a key role in the phases of disaster, which form a repeating cycle:



- Mitigation - Minimizing the effects of disaster. Examples: building codes and zoning; vulnerability analyses; public education.
- Preparedness - Planning how to respond. Examples: preparedness plans; emergency exercises/training; warning systems.
- Response - Efforts to minimize the hazards created by a disaster. Examples: search and rescue; emergency relief .
- Recovery - Returning the community to normal. Examples: temporary housing; grants; medical care.