

## **Electronic Event Calendar Assists Hospital and Community Officials with Disaster Planning and Training**

**PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Mar. 3, 2008** – The Hospital Association of Rhode Island (HARI), the Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) and the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency have launched a web-based event calendar, a tool designed to facilitate coordination of emergency preparedness events. The calendar, to be used by hospitals, municipalities and state agencies, will reduce scheduling conflicts and increase the opportunity to share resources and collaborate.

In an ongoing effort to improve emergency response through training, collaboration and the sharing of best practices, a variety of independent and interdependent exercises, courses, trainings and meetings are held throughout the year. These events often require the collective participation of federal, state and local personnel, as well as the coordination of numerous resources. The event calendar provides a single, centralized location to post information so it may be accessed by the entire emergency preparedness community.

“The event calendar is the latest product of hospitals’ dedication to providing the highest quality health care to the community,” said Edward Quinlan, president of the Hospital Association of Rhode Island. “Hospitals continue to work collaboratively and share best practices to improve emergency response activities. This collaboration extends to other health care facilities, emergency services and state agencies to ensure the best care possible for all Rhode Islanders.”

“Collaboration and coordination are critical in emergency preparedness,” said David R. Gifford, MD, MPH, director, Rhode Island Department of Health. “The Department of Health has consistently encouraged healthcare facilities and municipalities to work together to ensure a coordinated response effort during an emergency. This event calendar is another tool to help the Rhode Island response community achieve that goal.”

“By using this calendar all of our municipalities and hospitals can better collaborate to build training and exercise programs and exercise together, increasing the sense of realism for all involved,” said Brittan Bates, public information officer, Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency.

Federal grant funding (\$16,750) was used to purchase the event calendar, another important component of the state’s emergency preparedness program. The calendar is designed to complement other preparedness tools, such as the Hospital Capacity System and the upcoming Patient Tracking System, developed in conjunction with the Hospital Preparedness Planning Committee (HPPC). The committee was established to serve as a forum for cooperation among hospitals, the Rhode Island Department of Health, the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency and other appropriate agencies and organizations to develop a networked plan of cooperation and interaction involving the response of all hospitals in the state to a public health crisis. The HPPC is co-led by HARI and HEALTH.

Founded over a half century ago, the Hospital Association of Rhode Island is a statewide trade organization that assists member hospitals in effectively meeting the health care needs of Rhode Island, through advocacy, representation, education and services. HARI members work collaboratively to improve the quality of care delivered and address issues threatening access to health care including increasing health costs, workforce shortages and decreasing reimbursement. HARI members work together to ensure that all Rhode Islanders will receive comprehensive, high quality health care.

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