



Hurricane Elsa Tabletop Exercise Series After Action Report (AAR) /Improvement Plan (IP)

July 2020

Regional Healthcare
Preparedness Coalition

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EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	Hurricane Elsa Tabletop Exercises (Multiple Corridors)
Exercise Dates	July 2020
Purpose	The purpose of this exercise series was to provide participants with an opportunity to evaluate their plans and capabilities while preparing for an impending Tropical System in the midst of a pandemic.
Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HPP Capability 2: Health Care and Medical Response Coordination • HPP Capability 3: Continuity of Health Care Service Delivery • HPP Capability 4: Medical Surge
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the ability of the coalition members to Shelter-in-Place and/or Evacuate as required prior to or during a tropical system. • Assess the ability of the coalition members to effectively respond to the effects of a tropical system.
Threat or Hazard	Hurricane
Scenario	The National Hurricane Center reported that after a week in warm open waters, Hurricane Elsa is projected to move into the Gulf of Mexico. The local office of the National Hurricane Center issued a hurricane watch for a large part of the Gulf Coast extending from Mississippi to Texas. Hurricane Elsa continues to gain strength and is projected to make landfall somewhere along the gulf coast within the next 5 days. Forecasters are already warning of the potential for this storm to become an extremely powerful Category 4 hurricane.
Sponsor	Southeast Texas Regional Advisory Council (SETRAC) Regional Healthcare Preparedness Coalition (RHPC), Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response (ASPR).
Participating Organizations	Multiple Hospitals, EMS services, Public Agencies, and Private Partners. A complete list is included in Appendix D.
Point of Contact	John Wingate SETRAC 1111 North Loop West, Suite 160 Houston, TX 77008 (281) 822-4439 Email: john.wingate@setrac.org

SCENARIO OVERVIEW

Scenario

Impending Tropical System (Hurricane)

The National Hurricane Center reported that after a week in warm open waters, Hurricane Elsa is projected to move into the Gulf of Mexico. The local office of the National Hurricane Center issued a hurricane watch for a large part of the Gulf Coast extending from Mississippi to Texas. Hurricane Elsa continues to gain strength and is projected to make landfall somewhere along the gulf coast within the next 5 days. Forecasters are already warning of the potential for this storm to become an extremely powerful Category 4 hurricane.

ANALYSIS OF CORE CAPABILITIES

Aligning exercise objectives and core capabilities provides a consistent taxonomy for evaluation that transcends individual exercises to support preparedness reporting and trend analysis. Table 1 includes the exercise objectives, aligned core capabilities, and performance ratings for each core capability as observed during the exercise and determined by the evaluation team.

Objective	HPP Capability	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
Evaluate the ability of the coalition members to Shelter-in-Place and/or Evacuate as required prior to or during a tropical system.	Health Care and Medical Response Coordination		X		
	Medical Surge		X		
Assess the ability of the coalition members to effectively respond to the effects of a tropical system.	Continuity of Health Care Service Delivery	X			

Table 1. Summary of Core Capability Performance

Ratings Definitions:

Performed without Challenges (P): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.

Performed with Some Challenges (S): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. However, opportunities to enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency were identified.

Performed with Major Challenges (M): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s), but some or all of the following were observed: demonstrated performance had a negative impact on the performance of other activities; contributed to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and/or was not conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.

Unable to be Performed (U): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were not performed in a manner that achieved the objective(s).

The following sections provide an overview of the performance related to each exercise objective and associated core capability, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Evaluate the ability of the coalition members to Shelter-in-Place and/or Evacuate as required prior to or during a tropical system.

The strengths and areas for improvement for each core capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

HPP Capability 2: Health Care and Medical Response Coordination

Strengths

The *partial* capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Regional Coordination; the coordination of multiple response partners through the CMOC enables the region to better respond and coordinate resource movement in an efficient manner during a large-scale incident.

Strength 2: Community Coordination; coordination with local partners in the time of an emergency greatly enhances the capability of an agency or facility to develop a faster and more coordinated response to an incident.

Strength 3: Planning; Reviewing and updating plans to consider earlier trigger points are in place to address critical issues in dealing with COVID-19 patients.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the *full* capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Staffing

Analysis: It has been identified that many staff members may have other jobs who would have priority over their availability in the time of an emergency, causing a short fall in staff availability or reliability.

Area for Improvement 2: Communications

Analysis: Communications with staff and other response personnel can be a major shortfall during a large-scale incident. Establishing and updating methods of communication throughout an emergency situation is paramount.

Area for Improvement 3: Resource Management

Analysis: With social distancing guidelines in place for our in-patient population the need to identify and establish an Alternate Care Site or location is increasingly more important.

HPP Capability 4: Medical Surge

Strengths

The *partial* capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Regional Coordination; the coordination of multiple response partners through the CMOC enables the region to better respond and coordinate resource movement in an efficient manner during a large-scale incident.

Strength 2: Notification Technologies; The access to and use of technologies such as EMResource, WebEOC, and EMTrack permit a rapid sharing of information amongst all partners and thus allowing better coordination in the time of an emergency.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the *full* capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Planning

Analysis: To satisfy and meet social distancing guidelines, early planning must be completed to identify locations and resources needed for transportation, additional locations, and space for bedding/housing of essential staff and family members where applicable.

Area for Improvement 2: Staffing

Analysis: It has been identified that many staff members may have other jobs who would have priority over their availability in the time of an emergency, causing a short fall in staff availability or reliability.

OBJECTIVE 2:

Assess the ability of the coalition members to effectively respond to the effects of a tropical system.

The strengths and areas for improvement for each core capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

HPP Capability 2: Health Care and Medical Response Coordination

Strengths

The *partial* capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Communications; The current coordination between many facilities and agencies with the National Weather Service has led to early planning for a weather-related situation or disaster situations.

Strength 2: Notification Technologies; The access to and use of technologies such as EMResource, WebEOC, and EMTrack permit a rapid sharing of information amongst all partners and thus allowing better coordination in the time of an emergency.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the *full* capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Resource Availability

Analysis: With multiple healthcare facilities in the region requiring many of the same resources, coupled with the limited number of vendors with multiple agreements for the same resources, there will be extreme shortages of needed resources and supplies, look to alternate vendors and network with similar agencies to set up MOA's/MOU's.

Area for Improvement 2: Staffing

Analysis: It has been identified that many staff members may have other jobs who would have priority over their availability in the time of an emergency, causing a short fall in staff availability or reliability.

HPP Capability 3: Continuity of Health Care Service Delivery

Strengths

The *Partial* capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength 1: Planning; Early collaboration with our planning partners to ensure final planning arrangements are in place and resources will be available prior to a storms arrival.

Strength 2: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); The previous availability and distribution of PPE from SETRAC has enabled individual facilities to build a supply that could endure through the duration of a tropical system, when other supply chains may be disrupted.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the *full* capability level:

Area for Improvement 1: Resource Availability

Analysis: With the Social Distancing recommendations set forth; considerations must be made for transportation, Alternate Care Site Locations, and space for bedding down or housing essential staff and family members where applicable.

Area for Improvement 2: Planning

Analysis: Alternate Care Site identification; pre-identify and establish agreements for at least three (3) Alternate Care Sites capable of holding patients and staff for emergency situations.

Objective	HPP Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Primary Responsible Organization	Start Date	Completion Date
Objective 1: Evaluate the ability of the coalition members to Shelter-in-Place and/or Evacuate as required prior to or during a tropical system.	HPP Capability 2: Health Care and Medical Response Coordination	Staffing	Ensure early and on-going communications/coordination with staff and their availability during emergency situations, also further coordination with partners and staffing agencies outside of the local area.	Each individual agency/facility	8/1/2020	On-going
		Communications	Communications with staff and other response personnel can be a major shortfall during a large-scale incident. Establishing and updating methods of communication throughout an emergency situation is paramount.	Each individual facility/agency	8/1/2020	On-going
		Resource Management	With social distancing guidelines in place for our in-patient population the need to identify and establish an Alternate Care Site or location is increasingly more important.	Each individual facility/agency	8/1/2020	On-going
	HPP Capability 4: Medical Surge	Planning	Ensure early and on-going communications/coordination with staff and their availability during emergency situations, also further coordination with partners and staffing agencies outside of the local area.	Each individual facility/agency	8/1/2020	On-going
		Staffing	Identify potential staffing shortfalls in the planning process to account for quarantined staff and sick family members.	Each individual agency/facility	8/1/2020	On-going

Objective	HPP Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Primary Responsible Organization	Start Date	Completion Date
Objective 2: Assess the ability of the coalition members to effectively respond to the effects of a tropical system.	HPP Capability 2: Health Care and Medical Response Coordination	Resource Availability	Identify Alternate and back-up vendors and network with similar agencies to establish up MOA's/MOU's.	Each individual agency/facility	8/1/2020	On-going
	HPP Capability 3: Continuity of Health Care Service Delivery	Resource Availability	To satisfy and meet social distancing guidelines, early planning must be completed to identify locations and resources needed for transportation, additional locations, and space for bedding/housing of essential staff and family members where applicable.	Each individual agency/facility	8/1/2020	On-going
		Planning	Alternate Care Site identification; pre-identify and establish agreements for at least three (3) Alternate Care Sites capable of holding patients and staff for emergency situations.	Each individual agency/facility	8/1/2020	On-going

Appendix A: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Agency Name
Advanced Diagnostics Hospital
Affinity Hospice
Altus Emergency Center
Altus Hospital Baytown
Altus Lumberton Hospital
Atrium Medical Center
Baptist Hospital Beaumont
Bayside Anahuac
Ben Taub
Chelsea Gardens
CHI St Luke's Lakeside
CHI St Luke's San Augustine
CHI St Luke's The Vintage
CHI St Luke's The Woodlands
Christus St Elizabeth
City of Houston
City of Houston Mayors Office
City of Port Arthur
Columbus Community Hospital
Cornerstone Conroe
Creekside Healthy Living Communities
Debok Healthcare
Eagle Lake Nursing and Rehab
Encompass Health Sugar Land
Extracare Home Health Services
Fresenius Jasper
Galveston County OEM
Harris County Public Health
Harris Health System
HCA Houston Healthcare Clear Lake
HCA Houston Healthcare TMC

Houston Healthcare West
Houston Methodist Baytown
Houston Methodist Clear Lake
Houston Methodist Sugar Land
Huntsville Memorial Hospital
Kamcare Home Health
Kindred Hospital Clear Lake
Kindred Hospital Houston Medical Center
Kindred Hospital Houston Northwest
Kindred Hospital Sugar Land
Kindred Sugar Land
Kingwood Endoscopy
LBJ Hospital
Liberty Dayton Regional Medical Center
Liberty Health Care Center
Matagorda Regional Medical Center
MD Anderson
Memorial Hermann Greater Heights
Memorial Hermann Pearland
Memorial Hermann Rehab Hospital of Katy
Memorial Hermann Southeast
Memorial Hermann Sugar Land
Memorial Hermann Surgical Hospital Kingwood
Memorial Hermann TIRR
Memorial Hermann TMC
Nacogdoches County OEM
North Cypress Medical Center
Palacios Community Medical Center
PAM Specialty Lufkin
Polk County OEM
Post Acute Rehab Hospital Humble
Rice Medical Center
Rollingbrook Rehabilitation
Sabine County Hospital

Sacred Oak Medical Center
Seabreeze Nursing and Rehab
Shriners Hospital of Galveston
Springwoods Village Hospital
SSA Home Health
St Joseph Medical Center
St Mary Outpatient ER
Sugar Land Rehabilitation
Sun Behavioral
Surgery Specialty Hospitals of America
Texana BTTC
Texas Children's Hospital
The Medical Center of Southeast Texas Beaumont
The Medical Center of Southeast Texas Port Arthur
The Medical Resorts
The Woodlands Specialty Hospital
TTI Home Health
Tyler County Hospital
University of Texas Police Department (HSC)
UT Health Harris County Psychiatry Center
Winners Healthcare Solutions Inc.
Participating Agencies = 86 Participants = 221

APPENDIX B: EXERCISE PLANNING TEAM

Name	Agency/Facility
John Wingate	SETRAC
Adam Lee	SETRAC
Charity Dominguez	City of Houston OEM
Christopher Houglan	Encompass Health Sugar Land
Eric Steffel	Northwest EMS
Chris Collier	SETRAC
Jon Clingaman	SETRAC
Gary Litton	SETRAC
Chris Collier	SETRAC
Hilal Salami	SETRAC
Fidel Calvillo	SETRAC