

NEW MEXICO MODULAR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SYSTEM

CREATING YOUR COMMUNITY'S PLAN

FOR

MEDICAL SURGE RESPONSE

What is New Mexico MEMS?

Because taking action now can save lives, maintain public confidence and minimize public confusion and despair in moments of crisis. The New Mexico Modular Emergency Medical System (NM MEMS) is a community-based medical surge response framework to use when planning for a catastrophic medical public health incident. Developed by the NM Department of Health, NM MEMS will guide local planning for a health emergency, such as a pandemic, that could result in a surge of patients that overwhelms existing health care resources.

All Response Is Local

Disasters, no matter how large are local because all response begins at the local level. NM MEMS is not a one-size-fits-all emergency response; each community has its own leadership, resources and past practice derived from a unique history of responding to emergencies. The *NM MEMS Framework* and associated *Implementation Manual* will assist your community's development of a medical surge plan that will become part of your community's emergency operations plan.

Most incidents *do not* produce overwhelming patient surge. Typically, patients can be accommodated within the existing health care infrastructure. However, local leaders *must* plan for the possibility of a surge of patients beyond normal capabilities. At that point, your local community will activate your plan based on the *NM MEMS Framework*.

Being Prepared Mandates Tough Decisions

During a response to overwhelming patient surge, the demand for healthcare resources will exceed supply availability. Personnel, pharmaceuticals and other resources will be scarce. To plan for this possibility, the first step is an accurate assessment of your community's existing resources, an understanding or measurement of how many patients can be accommodated under normal surge conditions within your local system. How many patients can you support now and for how long? Knowing this will help determine the threshold or time when an alternative approach to patient care or the use of the functions described in the *NM MEMS Framework* may be needed.

Alternate Patient Care Areas

To cope with such an emergency, communities will need to designate alternate patient care areas, possibly away from hospitals and primary care clinics. NM MEMS provides a framework for planning these alternate care areas and identifies specific steps to take to make them feasible.

Training and Exercising is Essential

Training and exercising your local NM MEMS medical surge response plan is essential. Exercises and drills will give you the opportunity to test, assess and modify your plan, learning from experience.