

**“This is Not a Test”**: Navigating Pharmacy Emergency Preparedness Within a Health System Specialty Pharmacy

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**Conflict of Interest Disclosure**

- The speakers have no conflicts of interest to disclose

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**Learning Objectives**

- Interpret rules and regulations pertaining to pharmacy emergency preparedness
- Examine how to create a pharmacy business continuity plan
- Apply concepts of business continuity to real life scenarios

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Board of Pharmacy must understand the collaboration between various agencies when designing an emergency plan

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What is the NAPB's role in emergency management?

- Create an Emergency and Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan
- Work with state legislature to enact emergency dispensing and other related activities
- Develop and maintain contact lists
- Communicate NAPB efforts related to emergency planning

<https://nabp-pharmacy/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Emergency-Preparedness-Response-Guide.docx>

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Illinois Pharmacy Practice Act addresses the following during emergency:

<https://nabp.gov/legislation/il/ilc3.asp?ActID=1318>

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**We are UI Health Specialty Pharmacy Services**

- Services provided:
  - Medication access
  - Refill coordination
  - Clinical management
- Disease states:
  - Inflammatory conditions
  - Multiple sclerosis
  - Oncology
  - Others!





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**What about when the pharmacy is experiencing an unplanned event and may be unable to provide services?**

HEALTHCARE  
**Hospitals and Pharmacies Reeling After Change Healthcare Cyberattack**  
 Healthcare organizations forced to revert to manual procedures after Change Healthcare, part of Optum, disconnects services  
 By Anne Rowland and Catherine Bagg  
 January 10, 2024 12:18 pm ET

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**Pharmacies must have emergency plans for external and internal unplanned events**

Pharmacy with full resources helping to minimize community impact

This plan is influenced by federal, state, and local agencies

Individual pharmacy capabilities hindered and may not be able to provide critical functions to patients

This plan is individualized per pharmacy organization

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Specialty pharmacy accreditation requirements for emergency planning

- Workplace safety policies and procedures including emergency power to critical areas
- Emergency plan included in employee orientation and annual training
- Annual practice drills
- Business continuity plan

ACHC SRXONLY Standard Guide, Updated 12/27/2023  
URAC S.D Specialty Pharmacy Accreditation Guide

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How to create a business continuity plan

1. Identify who to include in development and testing of plan
2. Define critical functions to include in plan
3. Develop contingency plan for each critical function
4. Train the team
5. Test continuity plan - incorporate updates in response to findings
6. Retrain the team

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Tips for creating a business continuity plan

- Include inter-departmental team
  - Leadership
  - Front line
  - IT
- Make the plan comprehensive
  - Critical functions
    - ✓ Power
    - ✓ Internet
    - ✓ Phones
    - ✓ Staff
    - ✓ Facility Access
    - ✓ RX Distribution
  - Address various scenarios and lengths of time system is down



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Organizations must test their business continuity plan

- Real scenario vs. tabletop exercise

Critical Function	Goal	Discussion of Problem and Procedure	Validation	Observations and feedback	Responsible Lead	Met Goal Y/N	Action Plan

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Example of Table Top Exercise

Critical Function	Goal	Discussion of Problem and Procedure	Validation
Power	Maintain proper temperature range of medications	Scheduled power outage for 4 hours on a non-working day  Refrigerated medications transferred to inpatient pharmacy refrigerators	Confirmed generator function in outage location  Temp-track monitoring of temperature of specialty medications throughout duration of power outage while housed within inpatient pharmacy  Procedure verified with no changes required. No additional training required

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Example of Table Top Exercise

Observations and Feedback	Responsible Lead	Goal Met?	Action Plan
No issues noted with procedure; medication within appropriate temperature range	PIC of pharmacy	Yes	Ensure pharmacy renovations account for red outlets when designing plan

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### Don't forget to train the team on continuity plan updates

- Initial training: occurs during orientation
  - Review of business continuity plan and relevant emergency management modules
- Ongoing training: should occur annually
  - Updates to business continuity plan communicated to team
  - Review of any emergency situations that have occurred

**Best practice:** Hold a debrief meeting with team after emergency procedures have been implemented and completed to assess team response and follow up items

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### Think – Pair - Share

Think about an unplanned event that your pharmacy dealt with. Was your pharmacy prepared? Did you have a plan in place?

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### What could go wrong? Everything!



Weather      Pandemics      Staffing shortages      Facility issues      IT

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**Scenario # 1: Extreme Weather**

- Critical functions compromised: staff, prescription distribution
- What happened?
  - Chicago being Chicago (freezing temperatures, ice, etc.)
- Immediate actions:
  - Meeting with operational managers, front-line staff, and courier service
  - Task delegation with minimal staff onsite available
  - Prioritize patients to deliver based on medication on hand
  - Confirm with courier service where drivers could safely deliver
  - Transition plan for patients who needed medication ASAP

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**Scenario #1: Extreme Weather – Lessons Learned**

- Ensure front line staff is familiar with extreme weather procedure
- Ensure all team members are given consistent messaging during extreme weather conditions
- If extreme weather is identified in the forecast, plan ahead




Photo: Brian Kersney/Getty Images

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**Scenario # 2: Pandemic – Immediate Response**

- Critical functions compromised: access to facility, staff, prescription distribution
- Immediate actions: leadership meeting(s) to discuss short- and long-term plans to bridge patient care
  - Immediately reached out to IT for resources for remote work
  - Identified job functions for remote work vs those who need to continue to work onsite
  - Explored options for increase in mail order prescription volume

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**Scenario #2: Pandemic- Sustained Response**

- Continued refinement of contingency plan
  - Remote model for non-pharmacy based workers
    - Downtime plan if remote resources not working
  - Comprehensive standard operating procedures created for remote workers
  - Evaluation of additional delivery services



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**Scenario #2: Pandemic - Lessons Learned**

- Weekly huddles implemented to improve communication between employees
- Established 1:1 weekly meetings between manager and employee
- Flexibility is key



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**Scenario # 3: Staff Shortage**

- Critical functions compromised: staffing
- What happened?
  - Short-term significant reduction in work force
- Immediate actions:
  - Leadership meeting to discuss workflow and task delegation
    - What tasks needed to be continued during this time?
    - What tasks could be postponed?
  - Ensure access to training materials
  - Revised pharmacy hours of operation to accommodate available staff

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**Scenario #3: Staff Shortage –Lessons Learned**

- Pharmacists to be familiar with all pharmacy roles and responsibilities
- Use of learners where possible



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**Scenario # 4: Facility Emergency**

- Critical functions compromised: access to facility
- What happened?
  - Gas leak causing pharmacy team to vacate building– all pharmacy operations suspended during that time
- Immediate actions:
  - Onsite staff moved to safety
  - Leadership alerted and managers developed plan (short term vs. long term plan)
    - Remote employees notified and instructed to reach out to patients to inform of delay
    - Report generation for impacted patients

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**Scenario #4: Facility Emergency – Lessons Learned**

- Safety is always first
- Short term vs. long term plan based on length of outage
- Ensuring remote team has access to reports

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**Scenario # 5: Pharmacy Systems Down**

- Critical functions compromised: prescription dispensing, pharmacy system(s)
- What happened?
  - Pharmacy system(s) down
- Immediate Actions:
  - Meeting with leadership and IT (short term and long term plan)
    - Identified reports to assist with workflow
    - Managers created tasks from reports
    - Task delegation to front line staff
  - Tip sheets generated to explain modified workflows

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**Scenario #5: Pharmacy Systems Down – Lessons Learned**

- Continued flexibility if outage persists including modification of resources and workflow
- Consistent messaging to patients and employees
- Importance of communication updates with team



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**Key Takeaways**

1. Be familiar with rules/regulations (including requirements from accreditors) pertaining to pharmacy emergency management
2. Develop a business continuity plan for your pharmacy to include critical functions and contingency plans for each
3. After utilization of business continuity plan, reassess and modify plan if needed, based on performance and feedback
4. Train team on any modifications made

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Questions?

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