



Special Message

From AHA President & CEO Rick Pollack

August 29, 2017

Hurricane Harvey and How You Can Help

As we watch the devastating impact Hurricane Harvey continues to unleash on southeast Texas, we could not be prouder of the response of our hospitals and health systems – especially the thousands of caregivers working around-the-clock to care for victims and keep patients safe.

Nurses, doctors, emergency workers and others are putting their emergency plans into practice and working together to respond to incredibly challenging and dangerous conditions. And those efforts are saving lives.

At the AHA, we've been supporting our colleagues at the Texas Hospital Association as they work with hospitals and health systems, as well as local and federal agencies, to respond to the ongoing disaster.

We know that the crisis is not over. Historic flooding is expected to continue for days, and new challenges will arise. However, the commitment of the men and women of America's hospitals to keep their patients and communities safe will remain steadfast.

See more details below, and watch for more information and resources from the AHA.

AHA Working with Texas, Louisiana Hospital Associations and Member Organizations

Since last week, the AHA has been in close communication with the Texas and Louisiana hospital associations. AHA team members have worked with staff at the Texas Hospital Association, serving as a liaison with federal relief agencies.

The American Society for Healthcare Engineering – an AHA personal membership group – has been in contact with several of their individual members in the affected areas and will work with them to provide assistance to specific hospital infrastructure issues as they arise. In addition, ASHE will coordinate with hospital engineers throughout the country to provide materials and share expertise to ensure facilities are functional and safe for patients.

Disaster Declarations and Waivers

- President Trump has signed disaster declarations for Texas and Louisiana.

- Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price signed a public health emergency declaration for Texas and Louisiana, authorizing the use of Section 1135 waivers of certain Medicare and Medicaid regulations. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is coordinating the requests and approvals to use these waivers. [CMS's webpage](#) includes details on how to apply for an 1135 waiver.
- Texas Governor Greg Abbott has temporarily suspended all necessary statutes and rules to allow health care providers employed by a hospital and licensed and in good standing in another state to practice in Texas in order assist with the Harvey disaster response operations. Hospitals must submit to the applicable licensing entity each out-of-state provider's name, provider type, state of license and license identification number.

Blood Donations

The AABB is urging eligible donors across America, especially those with type O-positive blood, to make and keep donation appointments as soon as possible. See [information](#) that you can share on how to find a local blood drive or schedule an appointment.

HHS Actions

HHS is providing support as local officials are continuing to assess communities' health care infrastructure and medical needs. The latest HHS actions, such as the deployment of personnel and medical equipment and supplies, are on the [HHS webpage](#). Information on health safety tips during and after the hurricane by the Office of the Assistance Secretary for Preparedness and Response is available at www.phe.gov/harvey.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

THA Creates Fund to Help Hospital Employees Impacted by Storm

The Texas Hospital Association has established the THA Hospital Employee Assistance Fund to help hospital employees who experienced significant property loss or damage because of Hurricane Harvey. All funds will be used to directly assist hospital employees in Federal Emergency Management Agency-designated disaster areas; administrative services are being provided in kind so that 100 percent of donated funds will be used to assist hospital employees. AHA has contributed an initial \$50,000 to get the fund started. For more information or to make a donation, visit <https://www.tha.org/Harvey/ReliefFund>.