



Western MA Health & Medical Coordinating Coalition

RESPONSE PLAN OVERVIEW

Autumn 2021

Western MA HMCC Response Plan



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Purpose and Scope

The **purpose** of the HMCC's Emergency Response Plan is to establish a framework for the activation and coordination of HMCC activities in response to incidents or events that have public health or healthcare implications.

The HMCC's Response Plan **describes**:

- The **decision-making process** to activate the Plan
- The **notification process** during an incident or event
- The **communication process** for Coalition membership during an incident or event

Purpose and Scope

The **scope** of an HMCC's response is not limited to incidents or events occurring within its region.

Major disasters, catastrophic incidents, or other large events may result in Response Plan activation, particularly if they occur in neighboring regions or states.

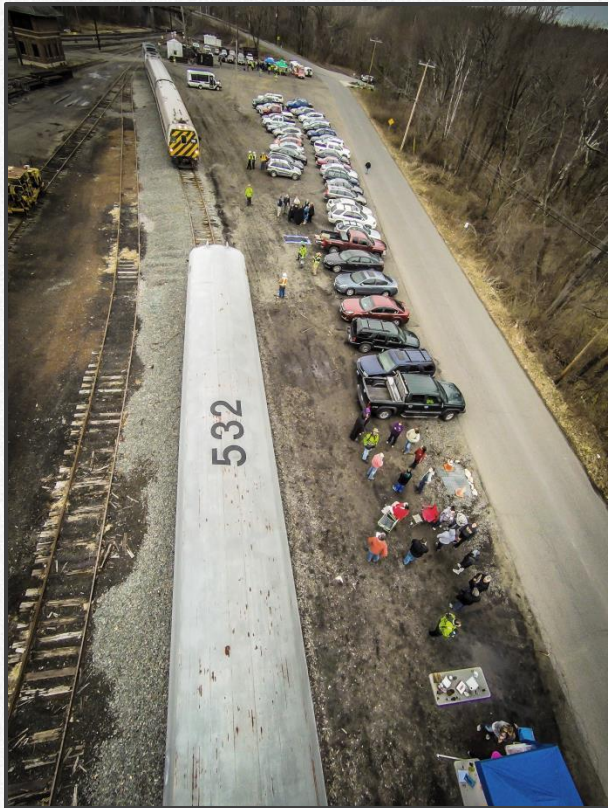
The HMCC's coordination will not supersede the municipal, regional, or state emergency operation plans or institutional plans, nor will it direct local agency efforts.

Assumptions

Incidents and events are **managed at the lowest possible geographic, organizational, and jurisdictional level** using an incident management system.



Assumptions



Both an incident and event may:

- Require communication and information sharing across HMCC disciplines
- Involve single or multiple geographic areas
- Involve multiple hazards or threats
- Affect critical infrastructures and services
- Overwhelm the capacity of local and regional organizations/agencies
- Require short-notice resource coordination and response
- Require sustained incident management operations and support activities

Assumptions

The degree of the HMCC's involvement and/or coordination in an incident or event depends largely upon the **known or potential impact on the public's health and the health sector's operations.**



Roles and Responsibilities



Sponsoring Organization:

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments serves as the Western MA HMCC's Sponsoring Organization, and employs all paid HMCC staff.



HMCC Steering Committee

10 Representatives from the 5 core HMCC disciplines; 2 seats per discipline, plus up to 2 alternate seats per discipline.



HMCC Member Agencies:

Every agency and organization represented within the health and medical discipline in western MA. Individual agencies may also be part of larger organizations. For example:

- the Pittsfield Board of Health is a member of the Berkshire County Board of Health Association (BCBOHA); both are HMCC members.
- Cooley Dickinson Hospital is also a member of the Western Region Hospital Emergency Preparedness Committee (WRHEPC); both bodies are HMCC members.



Department of Public Health (DPH) Regional Coordinator for Healthcare Systems and Public Health

- Regional coordinators are locally based DPH staff who assist healthcare systems and public health increase preparedness and response capacity.

Roles and Responsibilities



Sponsoring Organization

- **Provide 24/7/365 on-call coverage** in order to activate the Emergency Coordination Plan when necessary
- **Disseminate information** to HMCC member agencies and partner agencies
- **Coordinate situational awareness** of HMCC member agencies' status
- **Assist with resource coordination** by brokering connections to supplies, equipment, or other resources; manage HMCC regional cache of goods and equipment



HMCC Steering Committee

- **Act as subject matter experts** to support HMCC staff during response
- **Augment HMCC emergency operations center staff** for large-scale or prolonged events (member agencies' needs take precedence)

Roles and Responsibilities



HMCC Member Agencies:

- Follow their own internal response responsibilities
- **Communicate response activities** to HMCC leadership & staff
- **Communicate current or anticipated resource gaps** to HMCC leadership & staff
- **Communicate existing resources that may be available** to other HMCC members and staff to assist in the community response



Regional Coordinators (Healthcare Systems Coordinator and Public Health Coordinator)

- Follow their own internal response responsibilities
- Assist HMCC staff with response to public health and healthcare emergencies as appropriate



Concept of Operations

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Inbound Notification

“**Inbound notification**” refers to information coming in to HMCC staff/duty officer.

The HMCC may receive notification and/or situational awareness from varied sources:

- Health and Homeland Alert Network (HHAN)
- HMCC member agency
- Television, internet, or radio source
- Social media
- MDPH duty officer
- MEMA duty officer

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Inbound Notification Considerations:

HMCC staff/duty officers will conduct initial assessment of an inbound notification to determine whether the HMCC should take any action on the information received.

Considerations will include, but not be limited to:

- Source of the information
- Quality and quantity of the information
- Severity, magnitude, and timeliness regarding the potential or actual health threat or threat of business interruption
- Is the incident occurring in multiple jurisdictions or across multiple disciplines?
- Is the incident causing, or likely to cause, serious morbidity or mortality?
- Is there an association with a large event?
- Other intelligence/information to corroborate or support the information
- Anticipated need to provide information to MDPH staff, the public, media, or other response partners

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Outbound Notification

“**Outbound Notification**” refers to information pushed out by HMCC staff/duty officer to HMCC member agencies.

Outbound notification may take place via various modalities, including direct phone calls, direct emails, or HHAN alerts.

The notification message could include the following information:

- The nature of the emergency
- What are the expectations at this time of the HMCC and its member agencies
- What are the actions that HMCC member agencies should be taking at this time
- When is the next HMCC briefing

When the threat does not materialize, or the response is no longer needed, the HMCC will notify all member agencies and partner agencies previously notified indicating a return to business as usual.

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Outbound Notification **levels** ensure the right people get the right information at the right time - without being unnecessarily bothered by less relevant information.

Following MDPH notification level protocols, there are four notification levels:

- No Action Needed/Business as Usual (*White*)
- Be Aware (*Yellow*)
- Be Ready (*Orange*)
- Take Action (*Red*)

Internal Notification Chart *(adapted from the MDPH Internal Notification Chart)*

Notification Level	Indication	Who to Notify	Coalition Status
NONE	Initial assessment does not warrant further notification.	N/A	No action needed. Business as usual.
BE AWARE	Credible but unsubstantiated threat, developing situation or significant concern that does not immediately impact HMCC members or the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HMCC staff will remain available to address Steering Committee concerns and consult if further disciplinary push notification is needed Steering Committee members will consider the notification extent needed for their discipline and will communicate back to the HMCC Duty Officer what actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>they</u> are taking, or, would like the <u>Duty Officer</u> to take
BE READY	Potential threat that may affect HMCC members or the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee Relevant Disciplinary Coordinating Group Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HMCC staff will convene conference calls with Steering Committee Steering Committee will identify appropriate messaging and preparatory actions to be taken by HMCC staff and HMCC leadership Steering committee will decide what additional HMCC stakeholders should be included in strategizing or messaging Coalition leadership will identify appropriate timing for next communication, and identify the situational triggers that would escalate to a take action notification
TAKE ACTION	Confirmed threat to HMCC members or the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee Disciplinary Coordinating Group Leadership Disciplinary Coordinating Groups/all stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HMCC staff will convene stakeholder conference calls with Steering Committee and Disciplinary Coordinating Group leadership HMCC leadership will identify what sectors or sub-regions require take action notification, or if the entire region and all stakeholders receive take action notification HMCC leadership will identify appropriate messaging and response actions

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The Response Plan may be implemented in varying degrees, ranging from only a few functional components being actively involved to a large-scale regional activation.

Levels of activation are intended to reflect the increasing or decreasing need for resources to support response and recovery actions.

The HMCC duty officer will hold responsibility for determining activation levels for the HMCC. As time permits, the HMCC staff will consult with the Steering Committee in making this determination.

Activation Levels used in the Plan are:

- Monitoring
- Partial Activation
- Full Activation

Activation Level Chart *(adapted from the MDPH Activation Level Chart; activation levels mirror those of MDPH)*

<p>MONITORING</p>	<p>Characterized by a small incident or event. This level of activation may not include response from across the HMCC disciplines, but is characterized by a request for additional support to respond to an incident.</p> <p>Notification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HMCC staff will assess situation and decide whether to follow Be Aware or Be Ready notification protocol. HMCC staff will provide any additional notifications approved/requested by the Steering Committee HMCC staff will garner further information about support needed and prepare situational awareness reports; these reports will be provided to regional stakeholders as needed
<p>PARTIAL</p>	<p>Characterized by the exhaustion of resources and support activated at the Monitoring activation level</p> <p>Notification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee HMCC subregions/disciplines as needed MDPH OPEM MEMA Region III/IV Duty Officer MMRS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HMCC staff will follow Be Ready Notification protocol. HMCC staff will provide any additional notifications recommended by the Steering Committee HMCC staff will garner further information about supports needed and prepare situational awareness reports; these reports will be provided to regional stakeholders as needed HMCC staff will assist in procuring additional support resources needed
<p>FULL</p>	<p>Characterized by activation of resources across the HMCC or requests for significant resources outside of the HMCC's region. Activation at this level occurs when the HMCC and its agencies are in need of significant additional resources requiring assistance from others.</p> <p>Notification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee Full Coalition MDPH OPEM MEMA Region III/IV Duty Officer MMRS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HMCC staff will follow Take Action Notification protocol. HMCC staff will provide any additional notifications recommended by the Steering Committee HMCC staff will garner further information about supports needed and prepare situational awareness reports; these reports will be provided to regional stakeholders as needed HMCC staff will assist in procuring additional support resources needed

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Providing Regular Situational Awareness:

Depending on the event or incident, HMCC members may be asked to provide regular situational awareness reports to the HMCC sponsoring organization. Report frequency will be decided by HMCC leadership during regular conference calls.

HMCC members will send reports to hmcc@frcog.org, which will forward to on-call HMCC staff.

The essential elements of information that might be included in these situational awareness reports could include:

- Available means of communications
- Facility operating status
- Staffing status
- Status of evacuations or sheltering
- Critical medical services status
- Critical service status (e.g. utilities)
- Patient/resident transport & tracking
- Critical/Acute resource needs (materials, medications, utility back-up supplies, etc.)
- Public information messaging
- Any current or anticipated operational concerns

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Coalition Communication

Coalition communication methods may include, but are not limited to:

- Group e-mails
- Face-to-face meetings
- Internet conferencing
- Conference calls

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Resource Coordination

During an emergency incident, the HMCC may be called upon to assist in locating and/or coordinating resources.

Examples of past resources sought include:

- Personal Protective Equipment
- Refrigeration and air conditioning equipment/parts
- Intubation and other medical procedure equipment

In 2021, the W MA HMCC also built up our own supply of emergency PPE and goods/equipment, such as:

- 4 10' x 20' walled tents with heating and lighting equipment (including generators to power them)
- Mobile Emergency Operations Center (EOC) units (including Chromebooks, Wi-Fi routers and cell signal boosters, projectors, screens, whiteboards, programmable digital signs, and "Owl" cameras to allow for hybrid virtual meetings)

All available HMCC regional assets for emergency or special event use will be made available online in late 2021/early 2022.

Critical resource allocation and prioritization decisions will continue to be made by MDPH.



Western MA Health & Medical Coordinating Coalition

www.region1hmcc.org