



## **HHS CIRCULAR C-028**

### **HHS Emergency Management Council**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this circular is to establish the Health and Human Services (HHS) Emergency Management Council, in accordance with Goal 1, Objective 1.1., Health and Human Services Commission's Homeland Security Strategy Plan Implementation Plan (HHSC plan). The principal role of the HHS Emergency Management Council is to provide oversight of emergency management and public health preparedness efforts of HHS agencies. This includes the development of annual plans that govern emergency management training and exercises, expenditure of funds and related activities, and providing a forum for enterprise agencies to address issues related to emergency preparedness. The HHS Emergency Management Council will also ensure consistent and constant communication with, and provide strategic coordination to, the HHS agencies and HHS regional administrative councils (RACs) in the event a disaster affects the HHS infrastructure.

The HHS Emergency Management Council will be comprised of each HHS agency Chief Operating Officer or designee, the Associate Commissioner for HHS Business and Regional Services or designee, the Director of HHS Enterprise Risk Management and Safety, Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Director of Community Preparedness or designee, and any other individuals designated by the Executive Commissioner. As needed, the HHS Emergency Management Council will also request input from other areas within HHS, for example, the chief financial officers, Information Technology, Legal Services, and Communications. The Associate Commissioner for Business and Regional Services serves as the chair of the HHS Emergency Management Council, and the DSHS Chief Operating Officer will be the vice-chair. All members must complete the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) IS-700 and the IS-200 courses.

#### **Background**

The Director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security issued a letter to state agencies on November 14, 2005, requiring the submission of homeland security implementation plans communicating the priority actions state agencies would undertake to prevent or respond to acts of terrorism, or disasters (man-made or natural) in the State of Texas. The HHSC plan was completed, approved by the Executive Commissioner, and subsequently submitted to Governor's Division of Emergency Management (GDEM) on February 1, 2006. The HHSC plan was updated and filed with GDEM on February 18, 2008.



The Health and Medical Response After Action Report to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, produced by The Litaker Group, LLC, at the request of DSHS, identified areas needing improvement within the emergency management framework of the HHS enterprise. Communication and coordination of information among the HHS agencies before, during, and after a disaster were the subjects of two of the findings addressed by the report. The establishment of the HHS Emergency Management Council will ensure that the strategic coordination and information-sharing protocols necessary to address the findings are in place.

While the DSHS Multi-Agency Coordination Center (MACC) focuses on the health and medical response of the HHS agencies to public health emergencies in the State of Texas, the HHS Emergency Management Council will be focused on HHS enterprise continuity of operations and infrastructure recovery and provide oversight of the emergency preparedness efforts of HHS agencies. Infrastructure includes HHS employees, services, clients, offices, equipment, facilities, contracted resources, external partners, and internal and external communications regarding HHS enterprise business functions and delivery of services.

### **Discussion/Summary**

The HHS Emergency Management Council will serve as a key element of the HHS enterprise disaster preparedness, response and recovery efforts. Further, the HHS Emergency Management Council will implement and help coordinate the final recommendations of the workgroup that was formed subsequent to the Enterprise Emergency Management Memorandum of Agreement approved by all HHS departments and their respective commissioners. The HHS Emergency Management Council will meet monthly and/or at the call of the chair.

The HHS Emergency Management Council will be responsible for:

- Establishing the roles and responsibilities of the members of the HHS Emergency Management Council.
- Establishing an enterprise call-tree for all emergencies, to include a primary and two back-ups for each HHS agency.
- Establishing information-sharing protocols that are consistent across the HHS enterprise, to include information sharing with the external partners including media outlets.
- Ensuring coordination and accurate and timely communications with all relevant components of the HHS enterprise before, during, and after an emergency event.
- Providing situational awareness and resource status information to each HHS enterprise agency.
- Anticipating and identifying future resource requirements and coordinating with Enterprise Contract and Procurement Services.



- Coordinating and resolving policy issues arising from emergency incidents.
- Monitoring State Operations Center (SOC) and MACC situation reports, Web EOC, and scan calls.
- Ensuring coordination of information from the RAC, MACC, and SOC.
- Participating in HHS enterprise emergency preparedness exercises and statewide emergency exercises.
- Ensuring coordination of the After Action Report (AAR) regarding emergency response.
- Reviewing all emergency response AARs and determining the issues that should be addressed by the HHS enterprise.
- Reviewing all HHS enterprise loss information provided by HHS Office of Enterprise Risk Management and Safety, HHS Regional Administrative Services, and HHS Enterprise Legal Services.

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