



Weathering the Storm

Pharmaceutical Distributors Play a Critical Role During Complex Emergencies



As the vital link in the U.S. healthcare ecosystem, HDA pharmaceutical distributors manage the safe and secure delivery of millions of medicines and healthcare products to nearly 330,000 sites of care daily. However, when a catastrophic event — such as a storm or other emergency scenario — threatens the public, distributors quickly answer the call.

Before

Prepare Facilities and Routes



- Plan alternative delivery routes in anticipation of inaccessibility issues.
- Increase inventory of medication and supplies in anticipation of emergency needs.
- Ready facilities for storm and for use of the facility as a shelter for employees and their families.

Communicate to Customers



- Provide customers (pharmacies, hospitals, long-term care facilities) with advanced ordering options and inventory consultation to mitigate disruption of services.
- Recommend carrying stock of specialized products, such as snakebite anti-venom, which experience has shown are needed in flooding situations.

Coordinate with Public and Private Stakeholders



- Connect with local government agencies, FEMA and other federal agencies.
- Collaborate with manufacturers, other distributors and customers on emergency response plans.

Mobilize Critical Supplies



- Deliver storm supplies ahead of time (including backup generators, fuel, high-water trucks and refrigerated trailers), as well as high-use supplies (like linens, food and water).

After

Ensure Continued Facility Operations



- Ramp up capacity at alternative distribution centers to minimize disruption in services to customers.
- Transfer non-local employees to an affected distribution center, so local employees can address their family needs:
 - Help affected employees arrange for flexible schedules, carpools in restricted areas, as well as provide resources and relief items for employees and their families.
- Implement recovery strategies at distribution centers to bring services back online.

Assess Community Needs and Coordinate Help



- Partner with shelters to review and address patient needs.
- Report and share information with Rx Open, a database established by Healthcare Ready to help patients find open pharmacies in areas impacted by a disaster.

Deliver Essential Resources and Supplies



- Activate pre-stationed resources, such as high-water trucks, backup generators and fuel, to deliver needed products to customers in the affected area.
- Collaborate with manufacturers to assist with efforts and redirect products as needed.
- Procure helicopters and boats for deliveries if roads are not clear or flooded.

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Building on prior experiences navigating hurricanes, severe storms, blizzards and tornados, the distribution industry is adept at overcoming extreme supply chain challenges due to natural disasters and regularly support response and relief efforts.

Distributors have emergency preparedness plans in place to ensure seamless operations during a disaster — and through their logistics expertise, they mobilize to deliver much-needed medical supplies and disaster aid packages rapidly to impacted communities, ensuring critical medicines are getting to where they need to go, and ultimately, to patients in need.



Our Federal Partners

Department of Homeland Security

- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response

Department of Health and Human Services

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Food and Drug Administration

Bridging Communication Gaps: Partnership with Healthcare Ready



HDA distributors coordinate with Healthcare Ready, a private-sector organization that provides rapid access to emergency contacts, protected communications channels and reliable situation updates between manufacturers, distributors and pharmacies across the country. HDA helped found Healthcare Ready in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and remains a board member of the organization.

About the Healthcare Distribution Alliance

The Healthcare Distribution Alliance (HDA) represents primary pharmaceutical distributors — the vital link between the nation's pharmaceutical manufacturers, pharmacies, hospitals, long-term care facilities, clinics and others nationwide. Since 1876, HDA has helped members navigate regulations and innovations to get the right medicines to the right patients at the right time, safely and efficiently. The HDA Research Foundation, HDA's non-profit charitable foundation, serves the healthcare industry by providing research and education focused on priority healthcare supply chain issues.