Role of Local Public Health in Disaster Recovery: Successes and Challenges after Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy

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Successes

Coordination of Mental Health Programs
Pet Plans for Shelters and Evacuees
Pre-event Understanding of Employee Roles
Post-event Communication with Partners
Pre-event Planning with Volunteer Organizations
Staff Dedication
Community Outreach Through Disaster Recovery and Restoration Centers
Provision of Insurance Documentation
Post-event Updates to Evacuation, Patient Tracking, and Food Safety Plans
State Boards Updated Protocols and Procedures Post-Event

Challenges

Mental Health for Children, Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse
Integration of “Lessons Learned” into Existing Plans
Coordination with Local, State, and Federal Partners
Credentialing Clinical Volunteers
Volunteer and Donations Management
Long-term Support of Other Healthcare Partners
Extended Sheltering Plans and Patient Tracking
Training in Disaster Recovery
Exposure to Mold
Abandoned Structures and Permitting Issues
Canvassing and Supporting Non-evacuees in Their Homes
Long-term Epidemiological Monitoring
Delay in Asset Requests and Asset Arrivals
Shortage of Nurses
Delayed Recovery Grant Awarding
Unclear Criteria for Individual and Business Reimbursements
Long-term Communication Via Social Media

References

4. Photo: Survivors drape their home with banners to thank volunteers for helping to clean debris as part of the recovery process following Hurricane Sandy. © Rosanna Arias/FEMA

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