



CONVENING  
LEADERS FOR  
EMERGENCY  
AND RESPONSE

# Strategies for Managing Concurrent Public Health Emergencies

## TIP SHEET

Health care leaders must be prepared to face overlapping crises such as pandemic response, violence in the workplace and community, severe weather and cyberattacks, while simultaneously addressing daily challenges affecting the communities they serve.

This tip sheet offers practical strategies and examples from the field to enhance health care organizations' abilities to lead effectively through concurrent public health emergencies.

## Key Strategies and Considerations



### ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE WITH ORGANIZATIONAL PROTOCOLS

**STRATEGY** Follow established protocols for managing and reporting emergencies to ensure consistent security measures are being used throughout a concurrent or isolated incident.

**EXAMPLE** Valleywise Health emphasizes the importance of remaining compliant with federal protocol for more effective management of planning, response and recovery.

**STRATEGY** Develop a comprehensive training program to educate employees on emergency response protocols and on their roles during different types of emergencies.

**EXAMPLE** Valleywise Health prepares employees for public health emergencies through training and recurring drills to practice response protocols.



### FOSTER A CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION

**STRATEGY** Create ongoing opportunities to foster familiarity among team members at all levels of the organization to better prepare for and respond to an emergency.

**EXAMPLE** Denver Health's executive team works collaboratively across the organization during drills and real incidents to ensure all employees remain informed and can consequently feel empowered to play an active role in the response.

**STRATEGY** Engage board members and confirm they are prepared to be called upon to assist and share their expertise during an emergency.

**EXAMPLE** Valleywise Health proactively assesses current board members' skills and strengths to better understand how to best use their expertise during different types of emergencies.



## COORDINATE SITUATIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

**STRATEGY** Establish and activate an incident command system to encourage an appropriate, organized response to concurrent emergencies.

**EXAMPLE** Valleywise Health activates its incident command system during emergencies and nonemergencies when unified communications and operations are needed.

**STRATEGY** Use streamlined communication protocols to manage the flow of critical information in and out of the organization.

**EXAMPLE** During emergencies, Denver Health designates a public information officer, who is responsible for relaying consistent and transparent communication to key external stakeholders.



## BUILD CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

**STRATEGY** Routinely build and maintain partnerships so that those relationships can be leveraged in emergencies.

**EXAMPLE** During the pandemic, Denver Health worked closely with existing partners to address supply chain issues.

**STRATEGY** Create cross-sector partnerships with other local first responders to help strengthen community support and recovery.

**EXAMPLE** Denver Health has established strong relationships with local emergency management, law enforcement and other public safety agencies, enabling natural coordination and collaboration during emergencies.



## EMBRACE FLUIDITY IN THE FACE OF EMERGENCIES

**STRATEGY** Allow the leadership team the flexibility to take on alternative responsibilities as required by situational demands.

**EXAMPLE** Denver Health designates the roles and responsibilities of its incident command team based on circumstances, which may vary from the traditional chain of command used during normal operations.

**STRATEGY** Create opportunities for collaboration between administrators and front-line teams to foster an environment of approachability and support during high-stress scenarios.

**EXAMPLE** Valleywise Health created “rover shifts” during the pandemic, allowing administrative staff to provide on-site support to clinical staff.

“Your leadership, your preparedness, your culture — all that carries you right over into your emergency preparedness response.”

Steve Purves  
President and CEO  
Valleywise Health

Watch the moderated discussion on managing concurrent public health emergencies, part of the CLEAR Crisis Leadership Video Series:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYwuCCyFL0M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYwuCCyFL0M)

For additional resources, tools and guidance related to emergency preparedness and response, visit [www.aha.org/aha-clear](http://www.aha.org/aha-clear).

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