

State Partnership- California Direct Relief USA

Summary

Direct Relief USA, a nonprofit, distributes medical resources to nonprofit healthcare providers in all 50 states. Direct Relief works with public agencies including California Emergency Management Agency, California Emergency Medical Services Authority, and Medical Reserve Corps units to obtain donations of medicines and supplies from private businesses during emergencies.

Background

Direct Relief-California Emergency Management Agency Partnership: Cal EMA operates the Business and Utility Operations Center (BUOC), a mechanism to engage private industry during emergencies. Because of Direct Relief's expertise in medical product distribution, vast network of partner clinics, and over 100 ongoing donors from the pharmaceutical industry, it will assist in obtaining medical material from private companies during emergencies. Direct Relief participated in California's annual preparedness drill, and an MOU was signed between the two groups in July 2010.

Direct Relief-California Emergency Medical Services Authority Partnership: Since 2009, Direct Relief has worked with Cal EMSA to equip volunteer Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) members with a standard medical kit. Direct Relief designed and developed custom packs filled with medical supplies to help address community health needs in the case of an emergency. The pack was recognized by Cal EMSA as the California standard.

Goals and Objectives

1. To provide insight and best practices into the donations management process for medicine, supplies, and equipment
2. To facilitate private industry support of donations of medicine, supplies, and equipment during emergencies to state and local officials.
3. To inform public officials of the network of nonprofit safety net clinics and health center providers and their patients
4. To assist in mapping and analytics efforts around preparedness and response activities

Description

Organizational Background: Direct Relief is a nonprofit organization with expertise in providing targeted medical assistance to support the emergency preparedness and response efforts of safety net providers. These activities include the distribution of pharmaceuticals, medical supplies, equipment, and cash grants. Direct Relief maintains relationships with over 100 pharmaceutical and medical manufacturers that donate medicine, supplies, and equipment, which are then provided to Direct Relief's network of 1,100 community clinics and health centers nationwide to help them care for their patients. Direct Relief is licensed as a drug wholesaler in all 50 states and Washington D.C., is a Verified Accredited Wholesale Distributor by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, and has cold chain delivery capacity. Direct Relief-California

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Emergency Management Agency Partnership: Cal EMA's BUOC is a public-private partnership that allows private companies and nonprofits the ability to work with State officials. The BUOC includes private businesses such as Edison, Target, Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Lowes, and the California Grocers Association to assist in meeting needs that arise during an emergency. Through the BUOC, both the private and public sectors engage in emergency response consistent with the Standardized Emergency Management System and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Direct Relief and Cal EMA first began discussions about Direct Relief's potential for participation in 2009, and it became apparent that there was no organization in the BUOC representing medical and healthcare companies, nor was there a system in place for distributing donated medical resources into the hands of providers treating patients. Because of Direct Relief's expertise in medical product distribution and their vast network of community clinics and health center partners throughout California, Cal EMA asked Direct Relief to engage private companies in providing medical material assistance in times of emergency. In 2010, Direct Relief was asked by Cal EMA to assist in managing medical donations for the State during emergencies and act as the liaison with medical supply and pharmaceutical companies interested in the response efforts. Current proposed activities and coordination between Direct Relief and Cal EMA include notification of emergency conditions that may affect either agency's interests. Cal EMA will provide limited access to Direct Relief to use the States' Response Information Management System (RIMS), which will enable Direct Relief to monitor the emergency situation and identify needs for critical resources. Direct Relief will work with its donor network to fulfill those needs and ensure that resources are efficiently provided and are consistent with established procedures and requests. To further facilitate the partnership, Direct Relief will provide a representative to the State Operations Center when appropriate. Direct Relief-California Emergency Medical Services Authority Partnership: Direct Relief has worked with Cal EMSA to properly equip volunteer Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) members with medical supplies, with the purpose of delivering the right tools into the hands of trained and committed healthcare providers. In 2009, Direct Relief teamed up with Cal EMSA and other emergency response officials to create a standard medical kit for MRC volunteers. Direct Relief designed and developed custom backpacks filled with medical supplies to help address community health needs in the case of an emergency. The packs enable MRC members to respond immediately when disaster strikes. The pack was recognized by Cal EMSA as the California standard.

Requirements for Success

Key requirements for a successful partnership include good communication, dedicated staff, and financial support. The ability for good communication is essential. Both groups must have a clear understanding of their roles and confidence in the ability for both groups to carry out the activities of the partnership. Designated staff must be identified as champions for the partnership and should maintain regular communication with each other to ensure a good working relationship. Financial support is necessary to ensure that there is ample funding to sustain the dedicated staff and communication activities.

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Resources

Direct Relief USA has the following resources available through its partnership; a seat in the Emergency Operations Centers; Resources to help prepare form respond tom and recover from disasters; grants; and tools and templates.

Training and Exercises

Direct Relief USA hosts and participates in joint training and exercises with the public and private sectors.

Communication Tools

Direct Relief USA uses methods of communication with their public/private partners—email alerts; text messages; in-person meetings; newsletter; teleconferences; website; media outreach; and webinars, GoToMeeting/WebEX.

Links

www.directrelief.org/
<http://www.directrelief.org/usa>

Contact Information

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