



Courtesy of the National Museum of Health and Medicine Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Washington, D.C. (NCP 1603)

Preparing for Pandemics and Disasters

IT IS SAID THAT WE ARE OVERDUE for a major flu pandemic. And the threat of natural disasters and terrorist attacks seem to loom as much now as ever before. Delivering health care services in an efficient, effective and ethical way will be critical for any provider whose community in the throes such catastrophic events. The articles in this special section focus on getting ourselves ready for the unique and oftentimes overwhelming challenges that accompany pandemics and disasters. Topics include ethical decision making; partnering with federal and state response systems, recovering after a pandemic; and lessons learned from the past. Also connected to this theme is the “Press Conference” on page 70.

A common thread in all of these articles is the need for collaboration among responders. No single organization can prepare itself for every unpredictable turn of events during a disaster or major outbreak. It is only when health care providers, social service groups and government agencies work together that communities are better served during and after a crisis.

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