



DATE: September 8, 2005

TO: Chief Executive Officer
Chief Operating Officer
Vice President, Medical Affairs
Chief Nursing Executive
Emergency Preparedness Contact

FROM: Gary S. Carter, FACHE
President and CEO

SUBJECT: **More on Hurricane Katrina Relief Efforts**

I'm reaching out to you again with a number of updates following yesterday's dispatch on hospital and healthcare relief efforts. As I mentioned previously, the situation and details continue to be fluid, but with each passing day our delivery system's potential role to help becomes clearer. One clarification I need to make upfront. The correct Web address by which to register for the state's volunteer Medical Reserve Corps is www.njmrc.nj.gov/hcpr/. Today's items of interest include:

- Through the American Hospital Association, HHS has conveyed the message that acute care and trauma care needs of last week may not be the most immediate needs for today and tomorrow. Be patient. Two-week rotations of volunteers will still be needed, but not necessarily right away and not necessarily in an acute care setting.
- The plan to open 40 regional triage/emergency medical centers in the Gulf Region has been scaled back and may eventually be eliminated. Existing hospital capacity has apparently been sufficient to handle initial patient needs.
- 700 organizations and 10,000 individuals have already registered as volunteers through their state and federal outlets. Be aware that all this volunteer help may not be needed.
- HHS reports new healthcare response priorities as of today. In brief, they are: recovery and relief of the overburdened healthcare staff in the affected areas; returning hospitals to a state of operational normalcy as quickly as possible; rebuilding the entire health system's capacity to respond at all levels; achieve all the above in such a way that it is sustainable over the long run.
- The need for volunteers will be in such areas as chronic care, long-term care, mental health services, public health; and providing relief to existing healthcare staff, many of whom have lost everything they own and have taken residence at their hospitals. There

will also be a down-the-road need to help with the medical needs of a huge influx of people displaced to towns and cities in other states.

- Along those lines, New Jersey most likely will soon experience that influx of survivors with medical needs from the Gulf Coast. We will keep you apprised of how and when displaced persons and evacuees begin to arrive and how hospitals and other providers will be expected to respond.
- Finally, a single, unified National Care Fund will soon be created to accept credit card, cash and check donations to specifically help healthcare workers' various personal needs in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

If you have immediate questions regarding the various volunteer registration options, contact the Department of Health and Senior Services Relief Command Center. They can be reached by phone at 866-234-0964 or via e-mail at njdhsskatrinarelief@doh.state.nj.us.