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## COMPETITIVE DIVISION-PRACTITIONER

### Decompressing Acute-care Facilities during National Disaster Medical System Activations

Residential ancillary healthcare facilities (AHFs), encompassing post-acute settings such as skilled nursing, long-term care, inpatient rehabilitation, and long-term acute care hospitals, are underrepresented in disaster preparedness and response. Despite this historical oversight, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored their critical role in providing care and support for lower-acuity patients discharged from an overwhelmed healthcare system.

An examination of various health disasters, including the COVID-19 pandemic, reveals a consistent involvement of AHFs in supporting medical surge response efforts. Their relative absence in much of the disaster response and medical surge capacity highlights an opportunity to recognize AHFs' contribution within healthcare emergency management. Requirements from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and guidelines from the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR) indicate the importance of AHFs' role in hospital decompression during medical surge events. The project evaluates the gap between requirements and practice. In leveraging innovative practices to

integrate ancillary care into healthcare during disasters and all-hazard scenarios, an Ancillary Healthcare Coordination Plan is under development and discussion to enhance and build upon local coordination and information sharing. Through inclusive engagement of core healthcare partners in disaster response and medical surge planning, communities can be better prepared for the next event, local and global.

**Presentation Theme:** Healthcare Emergency Management

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