

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) released a new report, *Recommendations for a National Mass Patient and Evacuee Movement, Regulating, and Tracking System*, which recommends developing a coordinated multi-jurisdictional evacuation system that builds on existing resources and procedures available at the state, local, and federal level.

To develop a national system to locate, track and regulate patients and evacuees leaving disaster areas, the report recommends collecting eight essential data elements to identify each patient or evacuee, their health status and location from existing data sources like hospitals. It also recommends collecting baseline inventory levels of key resources such as available hospital beds and ambulances or other medical transportation. Appendixes discuss issues related to implementation of a national system, including:

- Legal issues such as HIPAA compliance.
- Existing tracking systems at the local, regional and federal level.
- Institutional record systems for hospitals, nursing homes, shelters, and other facilities.
- Existing systems that inventory and identify available resources.

Existing AHRQ-funded tools that can support a national system described in this report include:

- The National Hospital Available Beds for Emergencies and Disasters (HAvBED), which can help identify available hospital beds.
- The Mass Evacuation Transportation Planning Model, an online tool that estimates the number and type of medical transportation needed to evacuate patients.
- The Hospital Surge Model, an online tool that estimates, based on user-selected scenarios, the hospital resources needed to treat victims of various disaster events.

The recommendations report was developed by AHRQ with critical input and leadership from the Department of Defense. The report and other AHRQ-funded Public Health Emergency Preparedness are available at www.ahrq.gov/prep.