



Western MA Health & Medical Coordinating Coalition

Health and Medical Coordinating Coalitions:

An Introduction to the Western Massachusetts HMCC

Summer 2018

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The Basics

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The Basics

What is an HMCC?

Health and Medical Coordinating Coalitions, or HMCCs, are a growing national trend in building healthcare system emergency preparedness and resiliency.

HMCC's are comprised of individual healthcare organizations in a specified geographic area that agree to work together to maximize surge capacity and capability during medical and public health emergencies by coordinating preparedness planning, facilitating information sharing, mutual aid, and response coordination.

Individual organizations may be private, such as a hospital, or public/governmental, such as local health departments.



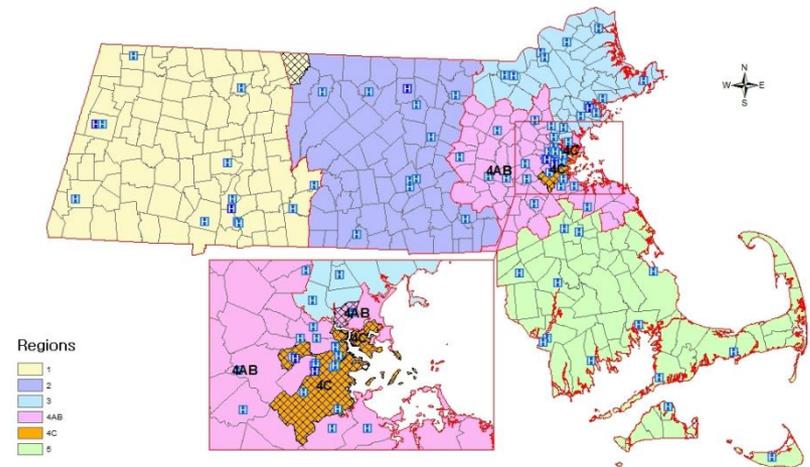
HMCCs are designed to supplement, not supplant, existing emergency response plans and procedures. They only coordinate, and do not hold statutory authority.

The Basics

Coverage Area

The Region 1 HMCC geographic spread is essentially the four western Massachusetts counties (Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden); however, some easternmost municipalities are located in the Region 2 (Worcester County) Coalition, namely: Orange, New Salem, Brimfield, Wales, and Holland.

All other western Mass communities are covered by the Region 1 HMCC.



The Basics

Membership

HMCC's build on existing groups and structures already in place in Massachusetts.

These sub-coalitions, or disciplinary coordinating groups, feed information and representation upwards towards the larger regional HMCC:

- County-level Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coalitions
- Western MA Emergency Medical Services
- Western Region Hospital Emergency Preparedness Committee
- MassMAP

The funding for HMCC's in Massachusetts comes primarily from the MA Department of Public Health, via Federal funds from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR).

Disciplines currently involved in the HMCC include:

- Local Public Health
- Hospitals
- Long-Term Care Facilities
- Community Health Centers
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Emergency Management

However, any stakeholders interested in healthcare system preparedness and response are welcome to join the Region 1 HMCC!

The Basics

How the HMCC “Fits”

The HMCC supplements the existing system and fills in gaps based on the situation and the need by working in tandem with the MA DPH Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management (OPEM) and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA).

Some situations might be so large and complex as to require additional assistance with coordination of situational awareness in the region, or addressing resource requests and mutual aid. This is where the Coalition would step in.

Conversely, some situations might require assistance with coordination of information and resources, but not enough to warrant full-scale activations of staff and resources by the state. Be the situation very large, or seemingly small, the Coalition exists to assist with coordination and fill in gaps.



The HMCC addresses several aspects of the Emergency Management Cycle: Planning & preparedness, response and recovery.

HMCC Structure

Sponsoring Organization

Steering Committee

Disciplinary Coordination Groups

Other Partnerships

HMCC Structure

Sponsoring Organization



The Franklin Regional Council of Governments, or, FRCOG, under contract with the MA DPH OPEM, serves as the Sponsoring Organization for the Region 1 HMCC.

As the Sponsoring Organization, the FRCOG provides dedicated staffing to the HMCC, to allow for financial and programmatic administration.

The FRCOG staff support the HMCC by:

- Providing administrative support to the Steering Committee and all other working committees, through the building and publishing of agendas and minutes
- Writing regional coordination plans and SOPS
- Serving an on-call function for emergency response coordination
- Providing technical assistance to member organizations

HMCC Structure

Steering Committee

The Region 1 HMCC has a 10-member Steering Committee, with 2 representatives from each of the 5 disciplines funded by MA DPH.

Steering Committee members are selected from within their discipline, and are expected to represent the best interest of the region as a whole.

The Steering Committee provides broad coalition oversight - they ratify the alignment of priorities for planning and preparedness, and work closely with HMCC staff to maintain a regional Emergency Coordination Plan that meets the needs of the various disciplines and communities in western Massachusetts.



HMCC Structure

Disciplinary Coordinating Groups

Several groups within the disciplines have a history of collaborating on preparedness and response.

The HMCC serves to connect the various groups, while also bringing in new stakeholders to build a more resilient planning and response system.

Public Health has been funded by DPH OPEM for many years to address federal Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) capabilities. This is accomplished by 4 sub-regional PHEP coalitions in western MA. Roughly county-based, the PHEP coalitions work collaboratively to enhance Local Public Health capacity to plan for, and respond to, public health emergencies in their communities.

These sub-regional PHEP Coalitions then come together to communicate and collaborate through the Western Region Advisory Group, or, the WAG. The WAG is coordinated by local DPH staff.

Hospitals have also received funding through OPEM for years, and have a coordinating group that includes all western Massachusetts hospitals. The hospitals address federal Healthcare Preparedness Capabilities, many of which align directly with PHEP capabilities.

The Western Regional Hospital Emergency Planning Committee (WRHEPC) plans joint trainings, evaluates incident responses for future improvement, and conducts joint purchasing of emergency equipment that can be shared amongst facilities. The WRHEPC is coordinated by local DPH staff.

HMCC Structure

Disciplinary Coordinating Groups

The existing disciplinary coordination infrastructure allows the HMCC to coordinate and align capabilities and capacity across disciplines.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) receives some OPEM funding to coordinate Western MA EMS. The EMS model is similar to public health, in that each county has a coordinating group, which feeds up to a regional western MA group. W MA EMS has full-time staffing, and has representatives on the HMCC.

Long-Term Care is coordinated through the Massachusetts Mutual Aid Plan, or, MassMAP, which is administered by the Massachusetts Senior Care Association. A statewide body broken down into regions, the MassMAP western region parallels that of the Region 1 HMCC.

Community Health Centers are newer to the existing statewide emergency preparedness structure, and while they have statewide coordination through the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, they do not have a formal western MA coordinating body. HMCC staff collaborate with local Community Health Center representatives and the MA League to convene as needed and ensure regional communication and coordination amongst all western Massachusetts Community Health Centers.

HMCC Structure

Other Partnerships

Though several disciplinary groups have been in place, the HMCC is a new model in Massachusetts, and we continue to grow our membership.

Not every member organization has a disciplinary coordinating group. HMCC staff work with individual member organizations, but will convene other health and medical stakeholders as needed to address preparedness and response concerns.

For example, in the past year, we convened home health and hospice providers from throughout western MA to discuss technical assistance needs, and collaboration potential to address elements of the new requirements under the CMS Preparedness Rule.



Benefits of HMCCs

To Member Organizations

To Municipalities

To State Agencies

Benefits of HMCCs

To Member Organizations

The HMCC provides a structure for a variety of health and medical stakeholders to better know and collaborate with their colleagues and neighbors - before an emergency occurs.

Be it disciplines or regions, the Region 1 HMCC can serve as a means to provide connection, ensuring that plans, trainings, and exercises are coordinated as new relationships are built.

In addition, participation in the HMCC can often address accreditation and regulatory requirements for community emergency planning and other preparedness activities.

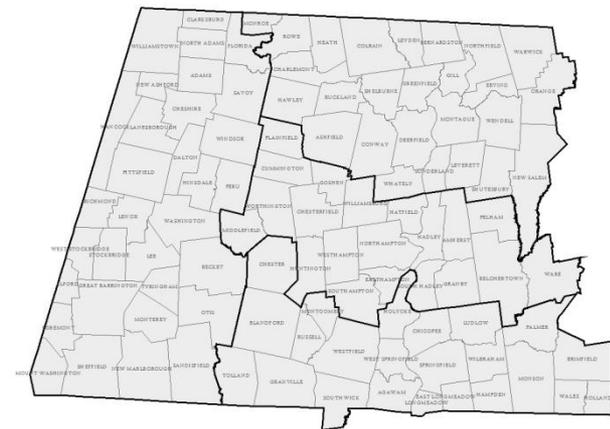


Benefits of HMCCs

To Municipalities

Though each municipality has an Emergency Management Director (EMD), that individual may be pulled in many differing directions, and may need assistance in coordinating the health and medical aspects of an incident.

The HMCC will also be able to provide greater situational awareness of the operating status of all western MA healthcare organizations, as well as specific public health information such as clinical advisories, ensuring local EMD's have the most up to date information.



Benefits of HMCCs

To State Agencies

MEMA region III/IV is responsible for the 131 westernmost MA communities.

DPH's Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management is responsible for providing assistance to all 351 MA communities.

Our state agencies do great work during a response, but when an incident has high intensity, they can become overwhelmed by call volume and resource coordination efforts.

Regional coordination ensures local municipalities do not get lost in the shuffle and allow the state to maintain more timely and accurate situational awareness. With greater awareness, the state can more strategically ensure resource coordination and deployment. Everyone wins.

The Region I HMCC is funded by DPH and will work closely with MEMA at the state and regional level. The Coalition efforts are designed to augment, not detract from, the work of the state.

Ultimately, the HMCC's are being created by the state to provide a structure for coordination amongst healthcare organizations, communities, regions, and the state.

HMCC Activities

Emergency Mgmt. Program

Preparedness

Response Coordination

HMCC Activities

Emergency Management Program

An Emergency Management Program addresses activities in all elements of the Emergency Management Cycle: Planning/Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.

For the purposes of simplicity, we will consider the HMCC's activities in two overarching structures: **Preparedness** (which includes planning) and **Response** (which includes recovery).

Though the activities are distinct, the two categories each inform the other: the stronger and more inclusive the planning, the more effective the response; and each and every response effort, including recovery, will inform future planning.



HMCC Activities

Preparedness



Most health and medical disciplines are already engaged in a wide array of preparedness activities. The goal of the coalition is to align efforts. By doing so, we ensure efficiency in both planning and in response.

Preparedness Activities the HMCC engage in include:

- Aligning disciplinary planning activities in the region
- Providing training opportunities for HMCC members
- Maintenance of a regional Emergency Coordination Plan (ECP) with functional annexes
- Exercising the HMCC plans, and bringing HMCC perspective to the exercises of our member organizations

Response Coordination

Response activities the HMCC engage in include:

- Maintenance of baseline response capacity via 24/7 on-call Duty Officer structure
- Situational Awareness
- Resource Coordination

Member organizations maintain their decision-making authority during incident response. The HMCC serves solely as a coordinating body.

Our job is to think regionally, which allows members to focus on their organizations while benefitting from a regional perspective and coordinating structure.

HMCC Activities

Response Coordination

Baseline Capacity

The core of an effective HMCC response is to ensure a rapid means of shifting from non-emergency to emergency states.

HMCC staff will rotate shifts as on-call Duty Officers to ensure two functions are continuously in place:

1.) Rapidly receive information and notify HMCC members of an emergency .

The Duty Officer will work with other Coalition staff, as well as DPH OPEM staff, to identify if a potential or actual situation warrants a notification to Coalition members.

2.) Determine if additional HMCC actions are necessary.

Beyond notifications of potential or actual situations, the Duty Officer will work with DPH as well as HMCC staff and Steering Committee to decide upon recommended courses of action by the HMCC.

HMCC Activities

Response Coordination

Sample Activities of HMCC response coordination include, but are not limited to, the following:

Provide situational awareness amongst and/or between member organizations and jurisdictional authorities by offering notification that an event is happening, and procuring/offering incident-related information that is not otherwise readily available.

Facilitate the coordination of response actions amongst member organizations if requested by the Coalitions' responding members or by jurisdictional authorities. This might be integrating response within coalition membership, or integrating the Coalitions' response with jurisdictional response.

Disseminate resource needs, and help match organizations that request mutual aid or other assistance with organizations that can provide that assistance.

HMCC response coordination is based on assumptions that:

- Member organizations maintain their decision-making sovereignty
- Decisions made by the Coalition during an incident response are made by consensus or are recommendations. Each organization will determine individually how they will respond to an incident and whether they will activate emergency procedures



Western MA Health & Medical Coordinating Coalition

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