

NORTHERN METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

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MEMBER HOSPITALS

Benedictine Hospital
Blythedale Children's Hospital
Bon Secours Community Hospital
Burke Rehabilitation Hospital
Catskill Regional Medical Center
Ellenville Regional Hospital
Good Samaritan Hospital
Helen Hayes Hospital
Hudson Valley Hospital Center
Keller Army Community Hospital
The Kingston Hospital
Lawrence Hospital Center
The Mount Vernon Hospital
The New York Presbyterian Hospital Westchester Division
Northern Dutchess Hospital
Northern Westchester Hospital
Orange Regional Medical Center
Phelps Memorial Hospital Center
Putnam Hospital Center
St. Anthony Community Hospital
Saint Francis Hospital
St. Joseph's Medical Center
St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital
St. Vincent's Westchester
Sound Shore Medical Center of Westchester
Vassar Brothers Medical Center
VA Hudson Valley Health Care System
Westchester Medical Center
White Plains Hospital Center

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A PUBLICATION ADDRESSING HEALTH ISSUES FACING HUDSON VALLEY RESIDENTS

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Hospitals Heed Forecasters' Warnings; Handle Hurricane Irene Safely, Efficiently

Hospitals in the lower and mid-Hudson Valley initiated their disaster plans and proceeded quickly and efficiently to engage their emergency operations centers well before the effects of Hurricane Irene hit the area on Sunday, August 28, 2011. With a state of emergency declared by the governor and indications that a severe storm carrying heavy rains and extreme wind gusts would pummel the region making it vulnerable to flooding, hospitals braced for the real emergency they had so often prepared for during years of mock drills and related disaster preparedness activities.

Communication is the key in disaster response and the seamless exchange of information between local health departments, the state health department, local first responders, law enforcement, and facilities themselves was smooth, according to local emergency management officials and hospital administrators, in spite of the fact that problems always arise during any emergency situation. At any given moment, the status of bed capacity, workforce supply, medical and pharmaceutical supplies, and patient conditions was at the ready. In lessons learned from the past, hospitals and emergency management teams are equipped with alternate communication devices, allowing communication to flow despite the loss of electric and/or cell phone service.

Lisa Corcoran, emergency preparedness director for the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association (NorMet) and the 29 hospitals the association represents, received timely updates from the Regional Resource Center (RRC) headquartered at Westchester Medical Center and commanded by J.T. Flick. The RRC was in constant contact with the region's hospitals and this information was relayed to Corcoran in a real-time basis, allowing her to similarly communicate information about storm status, hospital generator power, and other emergency operations between NorMet senior staff and hospital CEOs.

"Since 9/11, NorMet has engaged in a region-wide disaster planning effort that really paid off in this case," said Corcoran. "The hurricane was downgraded to a tropical storm before hitting the region, but those involved in the emergency management activities did not lose any of their concentration. Everyone knew their jobs and what to do. We were very well prepared."

Advocacy Logo Signifies Strength in Numbers



Given the delivery and payment reforms underway in Albany and Washington, DC, hospitals in the suburban regions immediately east and north of New York City are strengthening their advocacy efforts to ensure their regions' specific concerns are heard by lawmakers. The group, known as the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State (SHA), recently **unveiled a logo** geared toward solidifying its presence and heightening its identification among lawmakers, the business community, the media, and the public.

Hospitals in nine suburban counties are represented by the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State, stretching from the eastern counties of Nassau and Suffolk on Long Island to the seven counties north and westward that comprise the lower and mid-Hudson Valley. The Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (NSHC) on Long Island and the

Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association (NorMet) in the Hudson Valley are the primary advocacy organizations for hospitals in the respective regions. "As health insurers gain more market dominance and issues such as malpractice reform, the MTA payroll tax, and formation of a state health insurance exchange intensify, these hospitals realize a strong voice that can articulate their unique needs is necessary," said Kevin Dahill, president/CEO of both NorMet and NSHC. "In 2006, the Alliance published a ground breaking white paper that highlighted the startling disparity in commercial reimbursements between these regions and hospitals located in states in the immediate tri-state area. This was the beginning of the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State."

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