

## Disaster Planning For Hospitals

### Rural Hospital Preparedness

## What is "Rural"

- "Settled places away from the influence of large cities"
- Limited services, especially public services
  - Water
  - Sewage
  - Lighting
  - Mail Service
  - Communications
  - Healthcare

## Define Your 'Catchment Area'

- Metropolitan Areas (Dense)
- Urban Areas
- Suburban Areas
- Rural Areas

## Rural Area Facts

- Rural communities represent about 20% of Americas population, however <10% of all physicians practice in those communities
- Rural America has 20% higher rate of chronic illness and poor overall health compared to urban communities
- Less likely to have employer-provided healthcare coverage.
- Often not covered by Medicaid

- Each year between 1991 and 2001 the federal government spent two to five times more money per capita on urban than rural communities (Rathge & Johnson, 2005)
- Rural areas also received only one third as much federal money for community resources as did urban areas.
- HRSA and DHS money now distributed by capita.

- Critical Access Hospitals
  - Average 12 – 35 beds
  - Average 75-450 staff (includes physicians)
- 1,279 in US
  - Greater than 35 miles from another hospital
  - Greater than 15 miles in mountainous terrain

# *What Can Rural Hospitals Do To Prepare?*

## **Planning Issues**

- Facility Utilization
- Staff Utilization
- Logistics
- Staff Education
- Community Interoperability

**The bottom line is:  
*Know your community  
and it's realistic  
capabilities.***

***Preparedness is a result  
of planning, not  
purchasing.***

*Tony Rich*

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