



# Upper Cumberland Healthcare Preparedness Coalition Medical Response and Surge Exercise

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After Action Report/Improvement Plan - September  
20, 2022

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This exercise was intended to test the Upper Cumberland Healthcare Preparedness Coalition's (UCHC) ability to work in a coordinated fashion to evacuate downtown Cookeville, TN during a propane gas leak.

1. Assess UCHC capacity to support a large-scale, community-wide medical surge incident and evacuation event.
2. Evaluate UCHC preparedness and response documents and plans, including specialty surge annexes, transfer agreements, coordination plans with other state Health Care Coalitions (HCCs), and all other relevant plans.
3. Evaluate coalition members' ability to communicate and coordinate quickly to find and match available staffed beds, transportation, supplies and equipment, and personnel during a large-scale surge incident and evacuation event.
4. Evaluate the Incident Command System (ICS) to effectively respond to an active incident by quickly confirming initial alerts, timely activation and notification to staff, effective coordination with the hospital Emergency Departments (EDs) and/or first responder agencies.
5. Evaluate the appropriate management of the incident as it relates to facility operations during the event.
6. Evaluate the ability to establish and maintain communications with internal partners, area response agencies, the Upper Cumberland Healthcare Coalition, and others as needed, by utilizing the Healthcare Resource Tracking System (HRTS), ReadyOp, internal communication tools, and two-way radios.

The exercise planning team was composed of the Regional Healthcare Coordinator (RHC) and the Vulnerable Populations Coordinator (VPC). This exercise was planned in preparation for a tabletop exercise of a mass casualty incident and evacuation event.

The purpose of this report is to analyze exercise results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions.

### Major Strengths

The major strengths identified during this exercise are as follows:

- Coordination across coalition members.
- Discovery of additional assets for coalition use.

### Major Successes

The major successes identified during this exercise are as follows:

- Relationship building with hospital members and other coalition members.
- Rapid identification of hospital patient census.
- Identification of areas for improvement.

## Primary Areas for Improvement

Throughout the exercise, several opportunities for improvement were identified in the Coalition's ability to respond to the incident. The primary areas for improvement are as follows:

- Development of a list of individual facility assets that can be utilized by the coalition during an emergency.
- Development of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) for facilities.
- Integration of an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Supervisor into the Incident Command structure of the evacuating facility(s) to aide transportation determination needs and communications back to the Regional Medical Communications Center (RMCC).
- Development of a backup for communication with facilities in the event internet and/or cell towers go down.
- Ensure any acronyms and jargon are clearly explained or avoided so all participants achieve full understanding.

## EXERCISE OVERVIEW

<b>Exercise Name</b>	Upper Cumberland Healthcare Preparedness Coalition Medical Response and Surge Exercise
<b>Exercise Dates</b>	September 30, 2022
<b>Scope</b>	This is a community-wide tabletop exercise (TTX) with participation from partners of the Upper Cumberland Healthcare Preparedness Coalition.
<b>Mission Area(s)</b>	Response and Recovery
<b>Core Capabilities</b>	HPP Capabilities 1: Foundation of Healthcare and Medical Readiness, 2: Healthcare and Medical Response Coordination, 3: Continuity of Healthcare Service Delivery, 4: Medical Surge
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess UCHC capacity to support a large-scale, community-wide medical surge incident and evacuation event.</li><li>• Evaluate UCHC preparedness and response documents and plans, including specialty surge annexes, transfer agreements, coordination plans with other state HCCs, and all other relevant plans.</li><li>• Evaluate coalition members' ability to communicate and coordinate quickly to find and match available staffed beds, transportation, supplies and equipment, and personnel during a large-scale surge incident and evacuation event.</li><li>• Evaluate the Incident Command System (ICS) to effectively respond to an active incident by quickly confirming initial alerts, timely activation and notification to staff, effective coordination with the hospital ED's and/or first responder agencies.</li><li>• Evaluate the appropriate management of the incident as it relates to facility operations during the event.</li><li>• Evaluate the ability to establish and maintain communications with internal partners, area response agencies, the Upper Cumberland Healthcare Coalition, and others as needed, by utilizing HRTS, ReadyOp, internal communication tools, and two-way radios.</li></ul>

<b>Threat or Hazard</b>	Propane gas leak in downtown Cookeville, TN. Evacuation of Cookeville Hospital and LTCF.
<b>Scenario</b>	<p>A BNSF train loaded with 10 tank cars of propane gas has derailed along the tracks just off Willow Avenue in Cookeville, TN.</p> <p>As they rolled off the tracks, one of the rail cars has been breached and is on fire, releasing propane gas.</p> <p>Propane gas is spreading in all directions.</p> <p>The engineer was not injured and was able to bring the forward portion of the train to a stop at approximately ½ mile from the derailment site.</p>
<b>Sponsor</b>	Upper Cumberland Healthcare Preparedness Coalition sponsored this exercise utilizing Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) grant funding.
<b>Participating Organizations</b>	CRMC, Public Health, Regional Medical Communication Center (RMCC), Putnam County Emergency Medical Services, Putnam County Emergency Management, Cumberland Medical Center, Riverview Regional Hospital, Macon Community Hospital, Livingston Regional Hospital, Saint Thomas Stone River, Dekalb County Emergency Management, Smith County Emergency Management, Smith County Emergency Medical Services, Cumberland Emergency Management, Overton County Emergency Management, TEMA, Vanderbilt Lifelight, Saint Thomas Dekalb Hospital, Saint Thomas Highlands Hospital, Saint Thomas Riverpark Hospital, EMS Consultant, Signature Healthcare of Fentress County, NHC HomeCare Cookeville, NHC Sparta, Signature HealthCARE of Putnam County, VBHCS, White County OEM, SunCrest Home Health – Cookeville, Perimeter Surgery Center
<b>Point of Contact</b>	<p>Michael Cooper, Upper Cumberland Regional Hospital Coordinator <a href="mailto:Michael.Cooper@tn.gov">Michael.Cooper@tn.gov</a> 931-646-7575</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Kyle Gamache, Vulnerable Populations Coordinator <a href="mailto:Kyle.Gamache@tn.gov">Kyle.Gamache@tn.gov</a></p>



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### **Exercise Planning Team**

- Michael Cooper –Coordinator, Upper Cumberland Healthcare Preparedness Coalition
- Kyle Gamache- Vulnerable Populations Coordinator

## EXERCISE DESIGN SUMMARY

### Exercise Purpose and Design

This exercise is an opportunity for Healthcare Coalition stakeholders to simulate an emergency in an informal, stress-free environment to initiate discussion of emergency guidelines, focus on training and familiarization with roles, guidelines, and responsibilities, promote greater understanding and ability to apply NIMS/ICS principles to your setting, and make improvements as identified through exercise outcomes.

### Exercise Objectives and Core Capabilities

The exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for the exercise. The objectives are linked to core capabilities, which are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve the specific mission area(s). The objectives and core capabilities are guided by elected and appointed officials and selected by the Exercise Planning Team.

**Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Core Capabilities**

Exercise Objective	HPP Capability, Objective, and Activity
Assess UCHC capacity to support a large-scale, community-wide medical surge incident and evacuation event.	Capability 1, Objective 2, Activity 2 Capability 1, Objective 4, Activity 3 Capability 1, Objective 4, Activity 5 Capability 2, Objective 2, Activity 1 Capability 2, Objective 2, Activity 3 Capability 2, Objective 3, Activity 1 Capability 3, Objective 5, Activity 1 Capability 4, Objective 2, Activity 1
Evaluate UCHC preparedness and response documents and plans, including specialty surge annexes, transfer agreements, coordination plans with other state HCCs, and all other relevant plans.	Capability 1, Objective 2, Activity 2 Capability 1, Objective 2, Activity 4 Capability 1, Objective 4, Activity 3 Capability 1, Objective 4, Activity 5 Capability 2, Objective 2, Activity 1 Capability 2, Objective 2, Activity 3 Capability 2, Objective 3, Activity 1 Capability 3, Objective 5, Activity 1 Capability 3, Objective 5, Activity 2 Capability 4, Objective 2, Activity 1
Evaluate coalition members' ability to communicate and coordinate quickly to find and match available staffed beds, transportation, supplies and equipment, and personnel during a large-scale surge incident and evacuation event.	Capability 1, Objective 2, Activity 2 Capability 1, Objective 2, Activity 4 Capability 1, Objective 4, Activity 3 Capability 1, Objective 4, Activity 5 Capability 2, Objective 2, Activity 1 Capability 2, Objective 2, Activity 3 Capability 2, Objective 3, Activity 1



	Capability 4, Objective 2, Activity 1 Capability 4, Objective 2, Activity 11
<b>All Facilities</b>	
Evaluate the Incident Command System (ICS) to effectively respond to an active incident by quickly confirming initial alerts, timely activation and notification to staff, effective coordination with the hospital ED's and/or first responder agencies.	Capability 1, Objective 4, Activity 1 Capability 2, Objective 2, Activity 1 Capability 2, Objective 2, Activity 3 Capability 2, Objective 3, Activity 3 Capability 2, Objective 2, Activity 1
<b>Exercise Objective</b>	<b>HPP Capability, Objective, and Activity</b>
Evaluate the appropriate management of the incident as it relates to facility operations during the event.	Capability 1, Objective 4, Activity 5 Capability 2, Objective 3, Activity 1 Capability 2, Objective 3, Activity 3 Capability 4, Objective 2, Activity 1 Capability 4, Objective 2, Activity 4 Capability 4, Objective 2, Activity 7 Capability 4, Objective 2, Activity 8 Capability 4, Objective 2, Activity 11
Evaluate the ability to establish and maintain communications with internal partners, area response agencies, the Upper Cumberland Healthcare Coalition, and others as needed, by utilizing HRTS, ReadyOp, internal communication tools, and two-way radios.	Capability 2, Objective 2, Activity 1 Capability 2, Objective 2, Activity 3

## Scenario Summary

The threat was a BNSF train loaded with 10 tank cars of propane gas that derailed along the tracks just off Willow Avenue in Cookeville, TN. One of the rail cars that rolled off the tracks breached and was on fire, releasing propane gas. The train stopped ½ a mile from Cookeville Regional Medical Center. Due to the fire and propane gas spreading, a 1-mile radius had to be evacuated. The city of Cookeville had to evacuate along with patients from CRMC and Tennessee Tech University students.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this exercise was great practice for an actual mass casualty/evacuation event. It was thought provoking, and participant feedback was positive. Most felt that the opportunity to get together virtually and talk through the scenario helped build better relationships and benefited future coordination among the participants. Participants expressed they successfully identified gaps and areas of improvement through exercise response. Members expressed interest in participation in this type of exercise more frequently.



APPENDIX A: EXERCISE SCHEDULE AND ACRONYMS

Time	Activity
<b>April 23, 2018</b>	
1:30 PM	Welcome, Opening Remarks, Background Review
1:45 PM	Inject 1
2:00 PM	Inject 2
2:15 PM	Inject 3
2:30 PM	Hotwash
2:45 PM	Close

Acronym	Term
CRMC	Cookeville Regional Medical Center
EMA	Emergency Management Agency
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
HPP	Hospital Preparedness Program
RMCC	Regional Medical Communication Center
RHC	Regional Hospital Coordinator
TTX	Tabletop Exercise
HCC	Health Care Coalition
HAZMAT	Hazardous Materials
UCHC	Upper Cumberland Healthcare Coalition
ED	Emergency Department
ICS	Incident Command System
LTCF	Long-term Care Facility
VPC	Vulnerable Populations Coordinator
HRTS	Healthcare Resource Tracking System
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding

## APPENDIX B EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Participating Organizations
<b>Hospitals</b>
Cookeville Regional Medical Center
Cumberland Medical Center
Livingston Regional Hospital
<b>EMA</b>
RMCC
TEMA
AirEvac Lifeteam
Pickett County EMA
Putnam County EMA
Cumberland County EMA
Jackson County EMA
Putnam County EMA
Warren County EMA
Overton County EMA
White County EMA
Vanderbilt LifeFlight
<b>EMS</b>
Jackson County EMS
Putnam County EMS
White County EMS
Pickett County EMS
<b>LTCF</b>
Life Care Center Crossville

Wyndridge Cumberland
Dominion Senior Living
NHC Cookeville
NHC Sparta
Signature Healthcare of Fentress County
Signature Healthcare of Putnam County
AHC Bethesda
Willard Branch Health and Rehab
<b>Dialysis / Home Health / Hospice / Ancillary Surgery / Other</b>
Davita Cookeville
Davita Sparta
VBHCS
SunCrest Home Health – Cookeville
NHC HomeCare Cookeville
Perimeter Surgery Center