

United States Senate
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
Roundtable Discussion
March 7, 2006

Q: How can local, state or federal agencies better structure their approach to disaster relief to support the work of community-based organizations?

Response: Key for success in the future – communication and planning with community-based organizations and key disaster personnel.

- Joint planning necessary
- Community-based center within or adjacent to Disaster Recovery Center –one stop shop for services and referrals – track trends
- Assessment of key medical facilities – be able to establish temporary structures for the purpose of distribution and goods and resources if necessary
- Impact on Free Clinics – growing population of uninsured, unemployed, or underemployed who are displaced. The decrease in patients able to pay for health care impacts the physician and provider ability to cover overhead costs. Trend – MD's moving from the area, bed closures in hospitals. Access to conventional and/or group insurance is limited
- Preparing for the next time – include the faith and community-based organizations in discussions for future planning and response – most of the organizations have been recipients of information in a hap hazard way – make organizations part of creating the solution and thus achieving success in the response efforts
- Coordinating response creates an understanding of the roles and capabilities of faith-based and community groups – trust is developed, not seen as an unknown entity
- Sharing of key resources (food) – support the value of skilled volunteerism

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