



Northwest Wisconsin  
**Healthcare Emergency  
Readiness Coalition**

**North West Wisconsin HERC High Consequence  
Infectious Disease (HCID) Health Care Surge Annex**

June 14, 2022

## Introduction

### Purpose

The Northwest Wisconsin Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition (HERC) provides these guidelines to the region for the response to a High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) Health care Surge Incident. This annex includes resources for first responders, public health organizations, and health care facilities. The intent of the annex is to identify resources to support first responders, public health organizations, and health care facilities in preparedness and response activities. This annex is meant to supplement and support any agencies' existing HCID plans. Guidance given in this plan supports a range of known and emerging infectious diseases and is tailored to response needs and severity of various infectious disease agent and scenarios.

### Scope

The HCID health care surge annex provides support and guidance to regional partners involved in an emergency response within the HERC region and other portions of the State of Wisconsin and/or adjacent states. This annex guides the regional level response and provides guidance to partners. Specifically, this annex is designed to address resources, communications, operational mission area resources, and other special considerations. This annex may be activated along with pandemic related annexes and departmental response plans as a means to address large-scale or complicated events.

### Background

A high consequence infectious disease (HCID) is defined by the Minnesota HCID Collaborative\* as a disease that:

- All forms of medical waste are classified as Category A infectious substances (UN2814) by the U.S. Department of Transportation

OR

- Has potential to cause a high mortality among otherwise healthy people and
  - No routine vaccine exists and
    - Some types of clinical specimens pose generalized risks to laboratory personnel

OR

- Risk of secondary airborne spread or unknown mode of transmission

\*MN HCID Collaborative: MD Department of Health, Mayo Clinic, University of Minnesota Medical Center, Minnesota Hospital Association, Minnesota Health Care Coalitions, Minnesota HCID-Ready EMS services

HCIDs are broken down into two categories based on their means of transmission: contact and airborne. Definitions of these modes of transmission and examples of each are listed in the Wisconsin High Consequence Infectious Disease Health Care Surge Incident Plan.

### Planning Assumptions

The HERC HCID Regional Annex assumes:

- The HERC regional response plan has been activated and efforts are being conducted to support communication and incident command operations.

- Staffing at health care facilities (HCF) may be challenged by becoming ill, fear of illness, or family obligations (e.g., child/family care if schools are out). Health care workers are a high-risk population during most infectious disease incidents.
  - The implementation of effective infection prevention measures and associated training are necessary for workforce health and safety.
  - Large-scale infectious disease outbreaks may require the recruitment of volunteers, retirees, and trainees to support and relieve health care workers.
- Health care facilities and vendors may become overwhelmed with the treatment and disposal of biohazard material; waste management guidance may be modified, as necessary, to support the health and medical system while maintaining safe handling and transport.
- Supply chain and delivery issues may occur and may have dramatic effects on clinical care.
- Roles and responsibilities of agencies and organizations will change depending on the severity and spread of the infectious disease incident and the respective level of activation by impacted jurisdictions.
- Frontline, treatment, and assessment hospitals are defined in the *Partners* section and in the Wisconsin Ebola Concept of Operations plan. This information may be referenced during an incident as a guideline for transportation decision making. However, communication must be conducted with the hospitals to understand their current capabilities for accepting HCID patients.
- Understanding of the pathogen, infection control, risk factors, clinical care, and patient outcomes will be in rapid evolution.
- Cases will require laboratory confirmation unless authorities no longer require testing to meet the case definition.
- During some infectious disease incidents, individual health care facilities may face fatality management challenges.

## Concept of Operations

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### Activation and Notifications

#### **Prior to Activation of the Regional HCID Annex**

- There are two general scenarios for which an HCID event may begin. Additional detail on these activation scenarios can be found in the Wisconsin HCID Health Care Surge Incident Plan.
  - A person presents either to a medical facility or to emergency medical services (EMS) with a potential HCID. This person receives medical evaluation at an appropriate facility and disease investigation occurs.
  - An incident occurs in which there is a threat of infection for an HCID. For example, a bat is discovered in an airplane. Disease investigation occurs and any potential exposures are evaluated at an appropriate medical facility.
- The Bureau of Communicable Disease (BCD), HERC, and Local Tribal Health Department (LTHD) receive a report of a potential HCID and conduct their normal operations to support disease investigation and health care operations. Communication is conducted between the agencies to ensure proper notifications and information sharing.

- Upon confirmation of an HCID, all personnel involved in the care of the patient should be notified by their organization and provided guidance for monitoring illness.

### **Upon regional annex activation**

The regional HCID medical surge annex is activated by the HERC Coordinator in collaboration with local and state officials. The activation may be requested by hospitals, LTHDs, or BCD in the event of a suspect, probable, or confirm HCID case.

- Command and coordination and information sharing efforts are conducted based on the scale and scope of the response.
- Incident size and scope are determined in coordination with local and state officials. Other plans (e.g., pandemic plans) may be activated based on the needs of the incident.
- Resources and support, as described in the Operational Mission Areas section, are evaluated for use and mobilized as needed.
  - Each operational mission area describes resources that may be used to support a health care surge of infectious disease patients. Each mission area and the corresponding resources are addressed and utilized on an individual basis based upon the needs of the response.

### **Upon state plan activation**

The State HCID Plan is activated when BCD, a LTHD, or a HERC determines that resources and support are needed to response to a health care surge. A health care surge is determined by current and forecasted capabilities (e.g., bed availability, staffing, and supplies) of a hospital to be able to safely conduct patient care. Local and regional resources must be utilized prior to the activation of state and federal resources. The HERCs may activate their regional HCID plans as needed. The state plan outlines state level resources to support the operational mission areas.

### **Deactivation of the regional annex**

The deactivation of the regional HCID annex occurs when the incident de-escalates to a point when hospitals no longer are experiencing or forecasting infectious disease related medical surge.

- The official deactivation is conducted by the HERC coordinator in consultation with local partners.
- Upon deactivation, the incident may still continue at what is considered a normal operational level. This includes ongoing medical care and mental health and family support services.
- Following deactivation, a review of the incident is conducted to inform future planning and training needs.

### **Communication Methods**

There are several forms of communication that may be used in the notification and coordination of an incident response. WISCOM radios and EMResource are state platforms that should be uniformly used to support statewide coordination. However, other communication methods are used to support regional and local responses based on the resources and needs of the area. The communications section of the regional response plans should be referenced for regional specific information. The Wisconsin HCID Health care Surge Incident Plan contains definitions for [EMResource](#), [WISCOM](#), [EMTrack](#), eICS, Radio channels, Phone (text, email, or call), Secure Fax, and Secure Communication platforms (e.g., ZOOM or TEAMS).

## HERC Roles and Responsibilities

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The HERC coordinators may be notified by emergency response agencies, LTHDs, hospitals, or the Office of Preparedness and Emergency Health Care (OPEHC). When requested, the HERC regions support coordination with local public health, health care institutions, and first responder agencies (police, fire, and EMS) to have a uniform and unified response to an emergency. The HERCs support communities before, during, and after an HCID incident. Roles and responsibilities for the HERCs include, but are not limited to:

- Support training efforts of health care organizations.
- Establish and distribute regional plans.
- Communicate with health care systems to understand regional resources and the need for training and resource stockpiles.
- Support communication and coordination efforts of EMS and hospitals as needed.
- Support of the local community by understanding mental health resources for first responders.
- Support or conduct review efforts of the incident and update plans with lessons learned.

## Partners

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The below organizations have been identified as organizations who are directly involved in the response to a health care surge caused by an HCID incident. This is not an exhaustive list of organizations who might be involved in the overall response to an HCID incident.

**Emergency Medical Services (EMS)** EMS agencies provide two services during an HCID incident: emergency response and inter-facility transportation. EMS may be called to an incident scene for reasons related to an HCID or due to another illness or injury for emergency response services. Two EMS agencies have been identified in the HERC to be called by a medical facility to transfer a suspected or confirmed HCID patient to another facility for testing or treatment purposes.

### **To Request Transport within Eau Claire County contact:**

Eau Claire Fire Rescue  
715-839-4972 (Communications Center)

### **To Request Transport within the HERC Region, outside of Eau Claire County contact:**

Mayo Clinic Ambulance  
715-834-4411, Please advise dispatch that you are requesting a HCID transport.

**Medical Facilities:** There are three types of medical facilities that are categorized by their capabilities to collect testing samples and providing treatment: Frontline (no testing or treatment), HCID Assessment (test collection capabilities), and HCID Treatment (test collection and treatment capabilities). These designations are determined in real-time by assessing the current capacity and capabilities of the facility. There is no HCID Treatment facility in the HERC region.

### **HCID Assessment Facility within the HERC:**

Sacred Heart Hospital, Eau Claire, WI

715-717-4222 (Emergency Department) OR 715-717-5111 (Call Center)

**Bureau of Communicable Diseases (BCD):** The primary responsibilities of BCD include developing and maintaining infectious disease surveillance; providing guidance and support for the public health investigation of cases and outbreaks; and promoting the prevention and awareness of communicable diseases and other conditions of public health concern.

**Local and Tribal Health Departments (LTHD):** LTHDs have the responsibility and authority to conduct infectious disease investigations; distribute or deploy disease mitigation resources; conduct community health assessments; and promote the prevention and awareness of communicable diseases and other conditions of public health concern.

**Office of Preparedness and Emergency Health Care, Wisconsin Department of Health Services:** The main function of OPEHC is to support and enhance the capacity of the state, local public health departments and tribes, and the health care system to prepare for public health threats and emergencies through planning, exercising, responding, and training.

## Operational Mission Areas

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The HERC's primary responsibility during an HCID incident is to support local and state level responses by promoting information sharing and situational awareness. These activities are categorized into the operational mission areas listed below. Not all operational mission areas may be needed to support response activities.

- Surveillance
  - Support data reporting requirements in platforms like EMResource.
  - Supporting public health partners in local surveillance efforts.
- Safety and Infection Control and Prevention
  - Support information sharing of disease specific guidance.
  - Support PPE distribution from local, regional, state, and federal caches.
- Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions
  - Disseminate information through communication networks.
- Surge Staffing
  - Direct local organizations to resources that provide staffing support.
  - Support local organizations in resource request processes.
- Supply Chain, Supplies, Personal Protective Equipment
  - Support supply distribution from local, regional, state, and federal caches.
  - Support local organizations in resource request processes.
- Support Services
  - Support ventilator distribution from local, regional, state, and federal caches.
  - Support local organizations in their efforts to provide support services.
- Laboratory
  - Support testing efforts conducted at the local and state level, including but not limited to, laboratory efforts, community testing sites, and specimen transportation.
- Waste Management, Decontamination

- Support efforts conducted at the local level to ensure proper disposal of waste and decontamination of persons.
- Conduct information sharing on guidance provided at local, state, and federal levels.
- Patient Care and Management
  - Conduct information sharing on guidance provided at local, state, and federal levels.
- Medical Countermeasures
  - Support engagement of partners in the distribution and use of medical countermeasures.
- Community-based Interventions
  - Support networking and relationship building amongst partners.
- Patient Transport
  - Support local organizations in resource request processes.
  - Document and communicate transportation needs.
  - Support the distribution of supplies to support EMS agencies.
- Fatality Management
  - Support supply distribution of body bags and PPE from local, regional, state, and federal caches.
  - Ensure an awareness of available resources.
  - Support local family assistance center efforts.

## Training

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Hospitals and EMS/first responder agencies should have plans and conduct trainings for the management of HCID incidents. Examples of recommended plans and trainings are listed in the Wisconsin HCID Health Care Surge Incident plan.

## Special Considerations

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### Mental and Behavioral Health

There are ongoing efforts to support the mental and behavioral health of responders, patients, and members of the public. The HERC supports operations conducted at the local and state levels. More information on these efforts can be found in the Wisconsin HCID Health Care Surge Incident Plan.

### Special Populations

Special populations are groups of people that are impacted by infectious disease events in a way that could potentially cause a surge on health care facilities. These special populations include, but are not limited to: persons with medical comorbidities, pediatric and geriatric populations, persons living in congregate care settings (e.g., long-term care or group home residents, homeless persons, and inmates), and persons with disabilities that may impact their ability to communicate, understand, or practice infection prevention measures. Mitigation of surges within these populations can be conducted through effective public health messaging and awareness and implementation of infection prevention measures. Additionally, decreasing surges of patients via discharge can be supported through the use of toolkits and tailored guidance to hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, congregate living settings and other impact organizations on the proper discharge and care of patients.

## Situational Awareness

A primary responsibility of HERC operations is the support information sharing and ensuring situational awareness. This communication is conducted through the methods listed in this plan and the HERC regional response plan. The method for information sharing may vary depending on the needs of the incident and the established command structure.

## Deactivation and Recovery

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The deactivation of the HERC HCID annex occurs when the incident de-escalates to a point when medical surge support is no longer needed for infectious disease patients. The official deactivation and recovery operations are outlined in the HERC regional response plan.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Additional Resources

Resource	Link
Category A Waste Definition	<a href="https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/sites/phmsa.dot.gov/files/docs/transporting-infectious-substances/6821/cat-waste-planning-guidance-final-2019-08.pdf">https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/sites/phmsa.dot.gov/files/docs/transporting-infectious-substances/6821/cat-waste-planning-guidance-final-2019-08.pdf</a>
DHS 110	<a href="https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/dhs/110/110">https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/dhs/110/110</a>
EMResource	<a href="https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/preparedness/systems/emresource.htm">https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/preparedness/systems/emresource.htm</a>
EMS Agencies	<a href="https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/ems/index.htm">https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/ems/index.htm</a>
HERC Regions and Contact Information	<a href="https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02587.pdf">https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02587.pdf</a>
Minnesota Department of Health HCID information	<a href="https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/hcid/hcid specifics.pptx">https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/hcid/hcid specifics.pptx</a>