

Multi-Agency Response to Major Hurricanes in Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands:

Ensuring Access to Quality, Safe Health Care Before, During and After the Disaster

Tuesday, November 27, 2018 | 3:30-4:30 p.m. | Room National Harbor #10

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Disclosures

Presenter has no interest to disclose.

AMSUS and ACE/PESG staff have no interest to disclose.

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Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this activity, the participant will be able to:

Learn how to effectively leverage your organization's role in response to natural disasters. Government agencies and contractors can work together to effectively collaborate before, during and after a natural event, helping to ensure positive outcomes and continuity of access, safety, and quality health care.

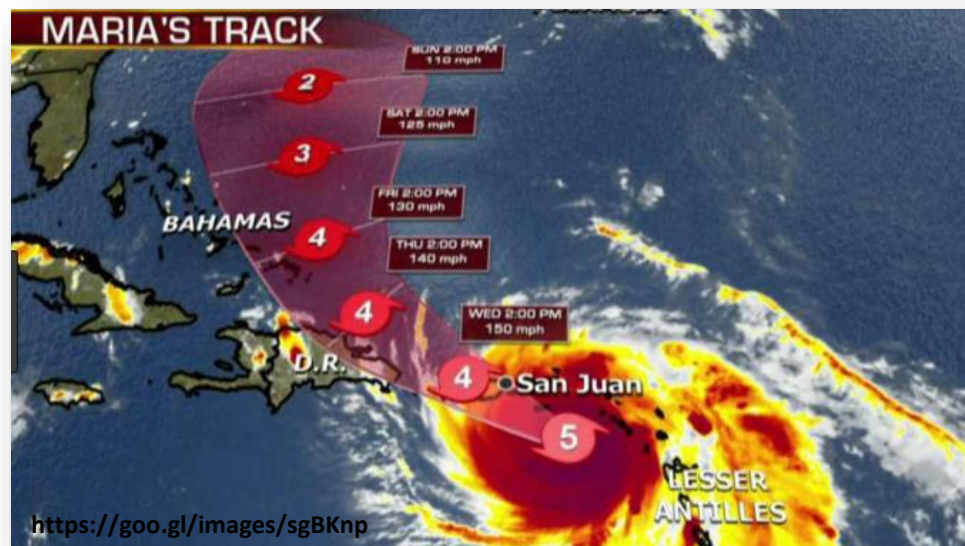
International SOS' Role

As the TRICARE Overseas Program Contractor

- International SOS administers the **TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP) contract** delivering health care support services to U.S. Active Duty Service Members, their family members, retirees and other TRICARE-eligible beneficiaries in nearly 200 countries and territories outside the 50 United States and District of Columbia
 - As the TOP contractor, International SOS is responsible for building and maintaining quality Provider Networks OCONUS
- International SOS' hurricane preparedness response included:
 - Pre-planning **before** Hurricanes Irma and Maria for TOP beneficiaries in affected OCONUS areas
 - Proactive outreach to beneficiaries and Network Providers in affected areas **after** Hurricanes Irma and Maria
 - Dedicated teams contacting Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs), Providers and Beneficiaries in US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico

Before Hurricanes Irma and Maria

- International SOS ensured our Provider Network was robust
- We collaborated with DHA Communications to send proactive alerts regarding access to care, prescriptions, disaster preparedness, etc.



DHA Communications: Disaster Alerts

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Emergency Procedures Extended for Hurricane Maria Locations

Emergency Procedures Extended for Hurricane Maria Locations

12/5/2017



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There are emergency procedures in place due to Hurricane Maria. [>> Sign up for future disaster alerts.](#)

Emergency Prescription Refills

State	Counties
Puerto Rico	All counties.
US Virgin Islands	All counties.

To get an emergency refill, take your prescription bottle to any TRICARE retail network pharmacy.

- Call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303
- Search the [network pharmacy locator](#)

If possible, visit the pharmacy where the prescription was filled.

Referral Requirement Waived

In the locations below, TRICARE beneficiaries can seek care from any TRICARE authorized provider. In addition, any beneficiary can go to any TRICARE authorized hospital or medical facility without any referral. Even if the hospital or provider is outside of the network. This is in effect until April 7, 2018.

Location
Puerto Rico
US Virgin Islands
Cuba
Bahamas
Dominican Republic
Haiti

If you're a TRICARE Overseas Prime and Prime remote enrollee in one of these locations, you're encouraged to change enrollment if you temporarily relocate to a new location for greater than 90 days. If you're permanently moving, you must transfer your enrollment to your new location.

For more information, contact our TRICARE Latin America and Canada Regional Call Center at 1-877-451-8659.

During Hurricanes Irma and Maria

- Slightly unusual situation, as Hurricane Irma struck St. Thomas and Puerto Rico from September 6-7, 2017
 - St. Thomas was severely impacted
 - Puerto Rico was less impacted
 - St. Croix suffered only minimal damage
- Approximately 1 week later, Hurricane Maria devastated **all three areas**



During Hurricane Irma

- International SOS began assessing Network capabilities
 - The sole hospital on St. Thomas was essentially non-functional
 - St. Croix's hospital was not damaged and was essentially fully operational
 - There was only limited damage in Puerto Rico
 - USVI Government redistributed patients from St. Thomas to Puerto Rico and St. Croix



Case Study:

Life-saving Aeromedical Evacuation During Back-to-Back Hurricanes

Background

- An Active Duty Service Member (ADSM) in the U.S. Virgin Islands was assisting with clean-up after the area suffered devastating damage from Hurricane Irma. The Service Member returned to his vessel complaining of severe shortness of breath and extreme numbness and pain in his legs.
- The medical staff onboard evaluated the patient and triaged him to an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) bed within the ship's medical quarters; the Service Member was exhibiting signs of severe heart failure.
- The medical staff onboard notified the United States Transportation Command (US-TRANSCOM) and International SOS, the TOP contractor, to coordinate patient movement. It was almost nightfall, so the ship's leadership agreed they could not move the patient to shore that evening. Instead, they recommended stabilizing the patient and monitoring his situation overnight, while International SOS simultaneously arranged for aeromedical transport early the following day.
- The TOP Medical Team in Philadelphia quickly formulated a plan to transport the Service Member from the ship and away from the Caribbean – since a second Hurricane (Hurricane Maria) was about to bear down later that week.

Outcome

- The ship's leadership, US-TRANSCOM and International SOS swiftly executed a plan for moving the patient from the US Naval ship to the airport - this was accomplished via a US Navy H-60 helicopter.
- Once the patient was delivered to International SOS' air ambulance carrier, he was moved onward to the United States. International SOS successfully moved the patient to a large multi-service hospital in Broward County, Florida.
- When the patient arrived, his condition was determined to be more serious than initially suspected. It was determined that the ejection fraction of his heart was less than 30% and his heart was quickly failing.
- After discussing the case and agreeing with medical necessity requirements with the Service and US-TRANSCOM, International SOS arranged for ground ambulance transfer to an appropriate military medical facility in Virginia (US).



During Hurricane Maria

- All three islands were severely damaged
 - St. Croix Hospital was essentially non-functioning
 - Nearly all hospitals in Puerto Rico were severely impacted
 - Power was provided via generator only
 - Fuel shortages became problematic (after 3 days)
 - Communications were non-existent, including disruption to cell phone towers
 - Patient movements



International SOS assisted Government agencies assessing on-the-ground capabilities for ongoing medical care and emergency aeromedical evacuations.

After Hurricanes Irma and Maria

- International SOS completely re-assessed Network capabilities on all three islands
 - Boots-on-the-ground resources were available in Puerto Rico both **during** and **after** the storms
 - Medical assessment teams were in place starting in December 2017, as beneficiaries began returning home
- Continuous updates were sent to DHA, ensuring an accurate site picture and assessment of medical care access/readiness
- Medical Team deployed to the US Virgin Islands in January 2018 to assess Network capability and operating capacity



International SOS Commercial Assistance

Wider Response to Hurricanes Irma and Maria

- International SOS' Americas Region Commercial Assistance Division leveraged our global network of 26 Assistance Centers, expert medical and emergency personnel around the world, etc., to assist members during several 2017 natural disasters, including Hurricanes Irma and Maria
- Examples: International SOS assisted the British Virgin Islands, the French Government in Dominica and Martinique, and also the Dutch Military on St. Maarten



International SOS Commercial Assistance

Wider Response to Hurricanes Irma and Maria

- International SOS Commercial Assistance assisted evacuee members once they arrived in Ft. Lauderdale
- We helped ensure International SOS patients/ members were triaged to receiving hospitals or placed in temporary shelters



International SOS Commercial Assistance

Wider Response to Hurricanes Irma and Maria

- **Actionable Insight & Advice:** From the early onset, our Regional Security Center in Philadelphia closely tracked the weather systems, sending out an alert as soon as the first storm, Hurricane Harvey, started to form. Over the next four weeks, we published approximately 100 alerts on Hurricane Harvey, Irma and Maria, many of which were Special Advisories.
- **Crisis Management and 24/7 Assistance:** As soon as Hurricane Harvey made landfall, International SOS activated a Crisis Management Team, which managed the communications and casework that supported clients impacted by all three hurricanes. Our Assistance Centers supported more than 10,000 related calls globally.
- **On the Ground Response:** We deployed multiple Incident Management Teams, comprised of medical and security specialists, to Florida, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico to support our clients on the ground. Our teams delivered vital supplies including food, water and medicine, and enabled internal movements to evacuation points of departure.
- **Evacuation Support:** We facilitated the evacuation of 365 individuals, as well as 10 pets, from hurricane impacted zones, assisting them with onward transport, hotels and other immediate logistics.

Lessons Learned

- Assume communications will be **extremely** limited and challenging
- Patients requiring frequent (recurring) life-saving medications or surgeries, or are pregnant, should be identified **before** the storm, with a proactive plan in place for treatment
- Prior to Hurricane Season, all Government and Health agencies should be prepared in terms of communications, response capabilities, etc., not only before but more importantly **during** and **after** the storm
- Leverage ancillary services of the broader organization, if they exist, to support pre-deployment, active response and post-disaster recovery (i.e., Network, On-the-ground Incident Management Team, Patient Movements, etc.)

Question & Answer Session

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