

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ESAR-VHP



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What does ESAR-VHP stand for?

Answer:

The Emergency System for Advance Registration of Voluntary Healthcare Professionals

What is ESAR-VHP?

Answer:

ESAR-VHP is a secure, web-based system used to register, qualify, and credential health care professionals **BEFORE** a major public health or medical emergency. By October 2008, all states were participating in the program.

Who's behind ESAR-VHP?

Answer:

ESAR-VHP is a national initiative of the Department of Health and Human Services and is implemented by the Health Resources and Services Administration. A state ESAR-VHP system will provide for the standardized credentialing of MRC members who may volunteer for a disaster outside their community.

Why was EASR-VHP created?

Answer:

The program's goal is to standardize how states develop a pre-registration system for emergency volunteer health professionals in order to create a national system where these volunteers can be easily identified to assist in emergency response. When disasters strike, hospitals close to the event often experience an influx of health professional volunteers willing to help care for victims. History, however, has shown that hospitals have difficulty effectively using these volunteers due to an inability to verify their identities or their basic licensing or credentialing information, including training, skills, competencies and employment. The system is designed to maximize the ability for health professionals to volunteer across state lines.

How does the Emergency Credentialing Program work?

Answer:

Each state program collects and verifies information on the identity, licensure status, privileges, and credentials of volunteers. The establishment of state programs built to a common set of national standards gives each state the ability to quickly identify and assist in the coordination of volunteer health professionals in an emergency. Interested health care professionals provide personal contact information and a self-assessment of discipline-specific capabilities and credentials. For those who are selected to participate, this information will become part of a central, confidential database that can be accessed by participating acute care hospitals, community clinics, emergency response teams and emergency management agencies during a large-scale disaster or public health emergency

In the event of an emergency, the state will use volunteer health professionals and volunteer health organizations registered with ESAR-VHP. The state will contact volunteers who have the skills and competencies needed for the current emergency to see if they are available to provide response and relief assistance.

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Is Banner mandating that I register?

Answer:

No. Although Banner is strongly recommending that its healthcare professionals register, we are not mandating registration.

Who can register with ESAR-VHP?


Answer:


ESAR-VHP is a registry for ALL health professionals. This includes individual/independent health professionals; active, inactive or retired practitioners; students enrolled in a health-related curriculum; and health professionals already affiliated with a volunteer organization (e.g., Medical Reserve Corps, Disaster Medical Assistant Teams and American Red Cross).

What healthcare occupations should register?

Answer:

ESAR-VHP Critical/Priority Occupations include:

-  Health Care Diagnosing & Treating Professionals
 - ✓ Clinical Social Workers
 - ✓ Mental Health Counselors
 - ✓ Pharmacists
 - ✓ Physicians (i.e., allopathic and osteopathic)
 - ✓ Physician Assistants
 - ✓ Psychologists
 - ✓ Registered Nurses (e.g., RN's, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, (CRNA's), Advance Practice Registered Nurses (APRN's))
 - ✓ Respiratory Therapists

-  Health Care Technologists & Technicians
 - ✓ Cardiovascular Technologists & Technicians
 - ✓ Diagnostic Medical Sonographers
 - ✓ Licensed Practical Nurses & Licensed Vocational Nurses
 - ✓ Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technicians
 - ✓ Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technologists
 - ✓ Radiologic Technologists & Technicians
 - ✓ Emergency Medical Technicians

What are the benefits of registering in advance? Can't I just register at time of disaster?

Answer:

Registering in advance will allow the state to be able to quickly identify, contact, and better utilize, health professional volunteers who have the specific skills and competencies needed to care for people who are injured or ill.

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Aren't I already registered through my professional association?

Answer:

No. To be included in the ESAR-VHP database, you must register on-line at your state's ESAR-VHP site. (See registration URL's for states in which Banner does business at the end of this document.)

My state already has an Emergency Volunteer registration program – do I need to register again?

Answer:

Some states have other disaster volunteer programs that are not ESAR-VHP programs (e.g., Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters or VOAD's). Since these organizations do not necessarily check professional licenses and credentials, you will need to register with the state ESAR-VHP program. And if you re-locate, until further notice, you will need to register in your "new" state of residence. For now, each state administers its own ESAR-VHP database. Once all the states' databases are centralized some time in the future, one-time registration will be enough.

Are there fees associated with ESAR-VHP?

Answer:

NO.

How will I be contacted in an emergency?

Answer:

Once registered, you will be asked about the best way to contact you during an emergency. Be sure to keep this information current and return to the program Web site to update your contact information when it changes. In the event of an emergency, if a decision is made to request your service, you will be contacted using the information you enter on the site.

What are my obligations under ESAR-VHP? If I register, am I required to deploy if I receive a call asking me to volunteer and I am unable or unwilling to do so?

Answer:

When you are notified to volunteer, you can make a decision about your availability at that time. If you agree to deploy, your information will be forwarded to the appropriate field operational officials.

You always retain the right to decline for any reason. You and your family's safety are always paramount during any disaster response and relief incident. Therefore, we strongly urge every volunteer to take some basic steps to prepare for potential emergencies/disasters through acquiring an emergency supply kit, developing a family communications plan and to stay informed.

What will my role be in a large-scale disaster or public health emergency?

Answer:

Every attempt will be made to match your skills, competencies, and license or registration level with your responsibilities during a large-scale disaster or public health emergency. On occasion, however, you may be asked to assist with activities that are less challenging than your usual professional activities. You should never accept responsibility for an activity or assignment that is outside your scope of practice as defined by your license, registration or certification.

In addition, you will have the opportunity to choose:

- The types of incidents you volunteer for (e.g., natural disaster, terrorism and public health emergency),
- How long you willing to deploy (e.g., hours, days/nights, shifts, weeks, etc.),
- How far you willing to travel, or

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- To become a registered federal volunteer disaster relief worker.

Will I be paid during deployment?

Answer:

Not by the state or the hospital/agency to which you are deployed. Your status will be that of volunteer.

Will I have professional liability and workers compensation protection when deployed under ESAR-VHP?

Answer:

Yes: Volunteers enrolled in the program are eligible for state- and/or local-sponsored liability and legal coverage and workers compensation within the borders of the state or local jurisdictions during a “declared state of emergency” or public health emergency crisis or, if officially deployed by the governor to a disaster area outside the state, under the national Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) or by other mutual aid agreements.

Any of the participating hospital CEO’s may declare a large-scale disaster for his or her specific hospital and request assistance from volunteers enrolled in the program. In this scenario, program volunteers may be eligible for coverage under the professional liability and workers compensation programs offered by the requesting hospital.

When would I be ineligible for professional liability and workers’ compensation protection?

Answer:

Volunteers enrolled in the program are not eligible for state-sponsored emergency worker liability coverage and/or workers compensation when:

- The volunteer emergency worker actions are deemed to be the result of willful misconduct, gross negligence, or acted upon in bad faith;
- The volunteer emergency worker is acting outside the course and scope of assigned duties and is engaged in an unauthorized activity;
- The volunteer emergency worker actions are not part of the official volunteer responsibilities requested at the time of deployment with the State, by local or state incident commanders or by the incident commander’s designate; or
- The volunteer emergency worker actions are taken independently from the Emergency Credentialing Program as a “self-deployed” volunteer.

Will my information be secure? Who will have access to my information?

Answer:

YES, your information will be secure. Personal information is maintained in a central, secure database administered by your state and is used ONLY for ESAR-VHP activities (i.e., an official request for assistance and recruitment for disaster trainings, drills and exercises). Under no circumstances will information be sold or shared with an entity that is not a program partner.

What information do I need to have available when I register?

Answer:

Individuals must provide contact information and, in some states, complete an online self-assessment. Since states were free to use the ESAR-VHP software their choice, registration screens will vary from state to state. See AZ registration screen at the end of this FAQ document.

Will my license and/or credentials be checked?

Answer:

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YES. ESAR-VHP is a referral system. If you are interested in volunteering with an ESAR-VHP partner hospital, agency, or emergency response team, your information will be forwarded to that institution or team for validation and, once validated, it will be returned for inclusion in the statewide database. And in some states, licenses/credentials will be re-verified periodically (e.g., every 6 months in AZ).

How do I register? What if I have trouble registering?

Answer:

ESAR-VHP registration sites are listed below. For those states without a site listing, please contact your ESAR-VHP State Coordinator (who may also be the Medical Reserve Corps State Coordinator). Your county or state Public Health or Emergency Management groups should be able to give you that individual's name and contact information.

- ✚ AK: Contact your state ESAR-VHP Coordinator
- ✚ AZ: <http://www.azdhs.gov/volunteer> or www.az211.gov
- ✚ CA: <https://medicalvolunteer.ca.gov/>
- ✚ CO: <https://covolunteers.state.co.us/VolunteerMobilizer/>
- ✚ NE: <https://volunteers.ne.gov/ESAR-VHP/faces/jsp/login.jsp>
- ✚ NV: Contact your state ESAR-VHP Coordinator
- ✚ WY: Contact your state ESAR-VHP Coordinator

Once registered, how will I update my information?

Answer:

When you register, you will receive a secure and unique volunteer identification password/number. This password/number is needed to log on the Web site to access program, disaster deployment and activation information; to register for training courses; and to update contact information.

Who should I contact if I still have questions about ESAR-VHP?

Answer:

Your state ESAR-VHP Coordinator. Since the organization administrating the ESAR-VHP program varies from state to state (e.g., Public Health, state volunteer management, Medical Reserve Corps), your state Coordinator is the best person to contact for further information.