

Georgia Nursing Home
Preparedness Project
for Disruptive Events:

Managing emergency
events and ensuring safe
transport of residents
during times of crisis

- *Customer User Case*

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Continuous
Preparedness
System

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table Of Contents	2
Overview	3
The Situation: Managing Complex Logistical Operations	3
The Challenge: Accessibility of Information for Decision Support	3
The Solution: The Georgia Nursing Home Preparedness Project for Disruptive Events	4
Phased Implementation: Phases I & II	6
Phase I: Creation of the Nursing Home Portal for enhanced Collaboration, Information Management, and the creation and submission of Nursing Home Emergency Operation Plans	6
Phase II: Training, Achieve 100% Participation	6
Future and Potential Uses	6

OVERVIEW

The Situation: Managing Complex Logistical Operations

Nursing home emergency response activities such as resident evacuations or sheltering in place can become complex logistical operations. Response planning requires coordination and partnerships between the private and public sector as each have interdependent roles during the event. Approaching the myriad of preparedness activities in a meaningful and systematic way is challenging because nursing homes and public health organizations are not typically equipped



with tools that enable effective collaboration, data collection and organization, while providing a standardized and repeatable approach to preparedness.

The Challenge: Accessibility of Information for Decision Support

Major events such as Hurricane Katrina and local events such as the recent flurry of tornadoes have continued to heighten the awareness of nursing home preparedness and have been a catalyst for change. In 2008, several nursing homes in the middle Georgia area had to shelter in place as a result of a power outage and debris blocked roads caused by tornadoes. Offsite support personnel needed access to critical information such as



resource inventories, acuity levels of patients, and contact information to facilitate support, coordinate efforts, and to ensure adequate resources were available for the duration of the power outage. Fortunately even though the information was not easily accessible to offsite support personnel, all of the nursing homes in the middle Georgia area were able to sustain themselves for the duration of the disaster.

While, the power outage was eventually rectified and the shelter in place activities at the local nursing homes proved effective, it certainly emphasized the need for a common platform for communication and reinforced the benefit of effective preparedness plans.

- *What would happen if power was out for over 36 hours?*

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- *What if all affected nursing homes were dependent upon a common resource provider unable to provide services because its resources were overwhelmed or its own operations were adversely affected by the same incident?*
- *How would local emergency management agencies and state oversight agencies know the acuity level of the patients within the affected nursing homes?*

The Solution: The Georgia Nursing Home Preparedness Project for Disruptive Events

The Georgia Nursing Home Preparedness Project is an initiative to promote state wide nursing home preparedness. The project is led by the Georgia Division of Public Health, the University of Georgia, College of Public Health Management and Mass Destruction Defense (UGA), the Office of Regulatory Services (ORS), Georgia Healthcare Association, Previstar Inc., along with over 300 participating nursing homes across the state.

Georgia Department of
Human Resources
Division of Public Health



Office of
REGULATORY SERVICES
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES **DHR**



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

The project will be completed in a Phased approach to include planning, training, exercise, and information sharing activities. The phased approach is designed to ensure a meaningful solution that is realistic and practical in order to achieve maximum stakeholder participation and acceptance.

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A backbone of the project is the utilization of Previstar's Continual Preparedness System (CPS). The CPS is a NIMS based solution customized to support the collaborative and comprehensive planning efforts of public health and nursing home organizations that are responsible for supporting emergency response operations during an incident.



For the initial phases, the CPS is utilized to meet two primary objectives.

- Provide decision support to nursing home administrators and Georgia response agencies such as Public Health by making critical information more accessible and usable through a Nursing Home “centric” information portal.
- Create a more standardized approach to the creation and submission of nursing Home Emergency Operations Plans to the Office of Regulatory Services (ORS), the state of Georgia’s regulatory agency overseeing nursing homes.

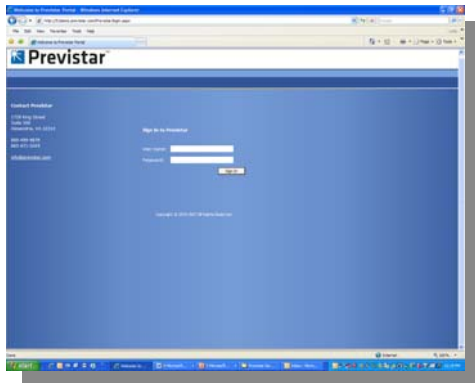
Future uses for the CPS suite of capabilities will be determined on an ongoing basis as additional Phases are implemented. However, a list of potential proposed uses submitted by the University of Georgia to the Georgia Division of Public Health is listed at the end of this document.

PHASED IMPLEMENTATION: PHASES I & II

Phase I: Creation of the Nursing Home Portal for enhanced Collaboration, Information Management, and the creation and submission of Nursing Home Emergency Operation Plans

Decision Support, Collaboration, Information Management

The CPS is the web based, hosted, platform used to create the information management portal. Web forms and data fields are “localized” to fit nursing home needs, terminology, and facilitate data assimilation for emergency operations plans, transportation agreements, bed counts, and other critical information from each nursing home in Georgia.



All stakeholders including nursing homes and public health organizations log in to the secure portal to share information. Each stakeholder is provided a unique user name and password. Users simply log into the system to use a suite of automated tools for searching, managing, or providing information needed for situational awareness and in order to make critical decisions during a crisis. The software is built on a SQL Server database that assimilates, organizes, and aligns

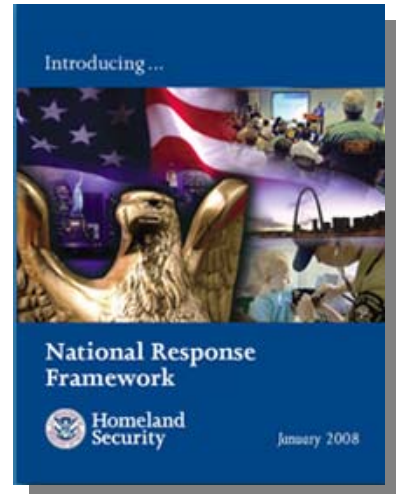
the data into usable and searchable information.

Kim Herron, LNHA, Vice President of Resource Management at Ethica Health and Retirement Communities, coordinates emergency support planning efforts for 48 nursing homes within Georgia. Kim sits on the project’s Steering Committee and is also Chair of the Working Group Subcommittee. Through her proactive approach and first hand experiences, she has helped lead efforts to customize the solution to meet the needs of nursing homes throughout Georgia. She has stated that, “Locating information in the past has been challenging because it was located in several different places like spreadsheets, binders, notebooks, and databases all located at different facilities. Previstar makes information more accessible by gathering all the information we need from each facility into one, easily searchable, location.”

“As a result, it allows us to be more proactive. Now, if a power grid is out, we as well as local and state officials can easily see which nursing homes may be affected and can identify where additional resources may be needed. We can all see potential overlaps in committed resources such as transportation and shelter. These are all key elements of your disaster plan that you want to identify prior to a disaster and not during a disaster.”

Emergency Operations Plan creation and submission

An additional aspect of Phase I is to create operational efficiencies and a more standardized approach to preparedness for both the nursing homes and for the regulatory bodies that oversee and approve the EOP's submitted by each nursing home. The CPS portal provides a standardized, repeatable framework to create and submit EOP's. By populating the web based forms and checklists, users automatically answer many of the components of the EOP as required by ORS. These components can be printed out in a formatted EOP for review, or they can be stored, maintained, and utilized electronically within the CPS. Most components are tied tightly with the principals and processes outlined by NIMS and ICS guidelines.



The Federal Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) and the Incident Management Systems Integration Division (IMSI) healthcare working group have identified 14 NIMS implementation activities from the FY 2008 NIMS Implementation Objectives for Healthcare Organizations that must be met in order for healthcare organizations to be eligible for FY2008 Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) funding by HHS.

“While ICS is not currently required, we want to use principals and terminology that will help us work more effectively with responders and provide a platform of consistency that all of our facilities can work from.” - said Herron. “We also believe that NIMS compliance will be required in the future and are therefore taking a proactive approach to stay aligned with national guidelines.”

Previstar™ Continual Preparedness System

Examples of information types that are captured in the CPS for nursing home emergency planning, response and recovery efforts. All updates are viewed in real time.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disaster Preparedness Plan Checklist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Census and Available Beds
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Documents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Damage Assessments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> External Communication Information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evacuation Sites and Status
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Food Supply List	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evacuation Sites and Status (ALT)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incident Chain-Of-Command/ICS List	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Generator Details
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supplies Survey Tool	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Power and Utility Information
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation Assets Survey Tool	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resident Characteristics

The screenshot displays the Previstar web application interface. The top navigation bar includes 'My Previstar', 'Planning', 'Response & Recovery', and 'Archives'. The main content area is titled 'My Previstar Home' and contains several sections:

- Planning Requirements:** A dropdown menu with 'View Action' and a list of planning actions: Disaster Preparedness Plan Checklist, Documents, External Communication Information, Food Supply List, Incident Chain-Of-Command/ICS List, Supplies Survey Tool, and Transportation Assets Survey Tool.
- My Messages:** A table showing message counts by type and date.

Type	Unread
Today	0
Yesterday	0
Older	0
- Operational/Contingency Planning:** A dropdown menu with 'View Action' and a list of planning actions: Census and Available Beds, Damage Assessment, and Evacuation Sites and Status.

A red arrow points from the 'Census and Available Beds' link in the 'Operational/Contingency Planning' section to a detailed form titled 'Census and Available Beds'. The form includes the following fields:

- Facility Name:
- Facility Address:
- Admin: Admin Phone: DON: DON Phone:
- Licensed Bed Count:
- Available number of MALE beds:
- Available number of FEMALE beds:
- Available number of NON-GENDER beds:
- Total available beds:
- Special restrictions on available beds (do not enter personal or confidential information):
- Approved By: Date / Time: 05/27/2008 12:32 PM

Phase II: Training, Achieve 100% Participation

The objective to Phase II is to train each nursing home and achieve 100% participation. Initial training has been administered over the web to over one hundred and fifty (150) nursing homes in less than 1 week. Each training session lasts just over 60 minutes. Follow up training will be provided to remaining nursing homes at schedule times. Additionally, Previstar will provide an on-demand web based recorded training session so that users can take refresher training at any time.

FUTURE AND POTENTIAL USES

The following is a list of potential uses of CPS proposed by the University of Georgia to the Division of Public Health to support the state's Disaster planning guide.

- ☑ Store response plans in a format that can be operationalized with a single click instead of numerous copies of monolithic documents.
- ☑ Enhance response plans by dividing them into more manageable and actionable missions and projects (e.g. evacuation etc.).
 - Digitize, store, & organize all relevant information for preparing, testing/exercising, and operationalizing plans. This includes but is not limited to: evaluation forms, checklists/Task lists, contact lists, incident plans, resource inventories, floor plans, maps, unlimited evacuation routes and tracking, as well as immediate "real time" situational awareness of developing events and contingencies.
- ☑ Store threat and vulnerability assessment data and enhance analysis capabilities.
- ☑ Identify, draw, and create visual model of evacuation Routes for each nursing home will be drawn on GIS maps as a visual model.
- ☑ Enable communication planning and protocols, & training guides.
- ☑ Provide general and summary overviews and reporting of the current state of preparations for nursing homes using ad-hoc and customizable reports.
- ☑ Create disaster plans with and without evacuations.
- ☑ Manage Transportation more effectively.
 - Retain the locations and capabilities of all transportation resources available throughout the state including ambulances, and private non-emergent transport providers.
 - Utilize the integrated GIS to facilitate a best choice when planning the logistics, routing and scheduling of both ambulatory and non-ambulatory evacuees.
 - Create and store traffic plans including evacuation routes, concept of operations, traffic control devices, post assignments, and staffing.
- ☑ Provide disaster preparedness housing.
 - Identify Incident related facilities including shelters, emergency staging locations and other facilities that can be activated and tracked during evacuations.
 - Assess, documented and survey facilities for suitability of use prior to an incident and used in the even of an actual occurrence or exercise.

- Create NIMS compliant and ESF task lists capabilities to plan for and track resources and pre-defined sheltering alternatives as designated by the state or entity.
- ☑ Enhance insurance perspectives
 - Insurance Documents can be stored in this web based system and linked with any resource and facility. Users with right permissions will be able to search, read and upload new documents as designated by the state. These documents can be in any electronic format along with comments. Contact information of insurance agents and companies will also be stored in this centralized repository.
- ☑ Manage protocols for supplies, donations, and community resources
 - ☑ Protocols as set out by the various entities will be stored in the web based system which will allow for state/council/nursing home wide sharing of information such as resource inventories, personnel, etc. for immediate activation of existing Mutual Aid Agreements. Documents will be linked to each resource category so that it is easily accessible to designated users.
- ☑ Support the legislative and legal aspects of nursing home emergency response.
 - Legislative and legal policies will be stored in the digital library, in appropriate folders, with correct permissions.