

# Local Libraries' Emergency Preparedness Partnership Ensures Mutual Aid & Promotes Disaster Information Outreach

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 Bethesda, Maryland

## PROJECT GOALS

- Determine the potential for a partnership among five medical libraries within walking distance of each other to provide mutual support in the event of a disaster affecting one or more of the libraries.
- Assess the ability to coordinate disaster information outreach activities and collections among the five libraries for the benefit of their parent institutions, library users and local community.

## MUTUAL AID PLAN

The partner libraries wrote and signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for mutual aid. The MOU is based on resources from the NN/LM Emergency Preparedness Toolkit. The MOU and supporting materials were written and compiled during one afternoon meeting that will repeat annually. The MOU is based on determining the most likely disaster scenarios for the Washington, DC area. The goal is to keep the process as simple as possible. NLM's Disaster Information Management Research Center provides logistical and moral support.

## PARTNERS

- The libraries created the Bethesda Medical Libraries Emergency Preparedness Partnership (BMLEPP) to aid each other in an emergency affecting library operations.



Suburban Hospital Medical Library, Bethesda, MD

- One-person hospital library
- Private community hospital, 238 beds
- Only trauma center in the county; 1 of 9 in Maryland



**E. R. Stitt Library**  
National Naval Medical Center  
Bethesda Maryland

E. R. Stitt Library, National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, MD

- Small-staff hospital library
- US Department of Defense military hospital, 205 beds -
- Third largest Navy hospital in US; receives Navy and Marine combat casualties



James A. Zimble Learning Resource Center, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Bethesda, MD

- Academic health sciences library at US Department of Defense military university
- No hospital
- Health sciences curriculum includes large-scale humanitarian assistance and disaster response



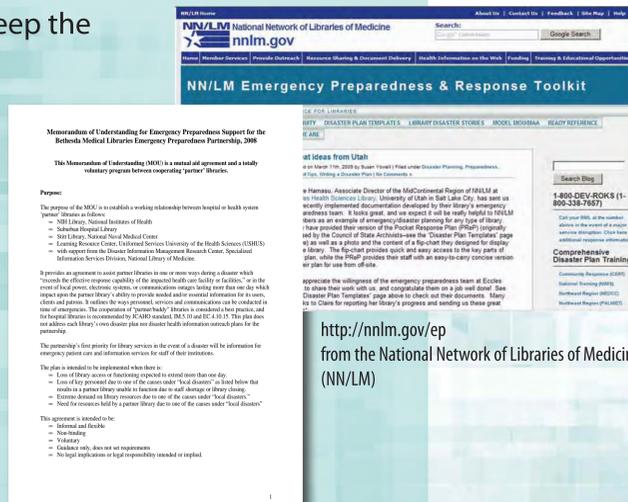
Disaster Information Management Research Center, National Library of Medicine

- 6-staff office with access to NLM collection, "world's largest medical library"
- No hospital
- Support for librarians providing disaster information outreach to their communities



NIH Library, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD

- 50+ staff research library for all NIH Institutes and some parts of HHS
- Federal research hospital (NIH Clinical Center), 234 beds
- Research patients only



- The Medical Libraries Partnership mirrors the Bethesda Hospitals' Emergency Preparedness Partnership that coordinates disaster drills, preparedness and response among the three Bethesda hospitals: a military hospital, a research hospital, and a private community hospital with a level II trauma center.

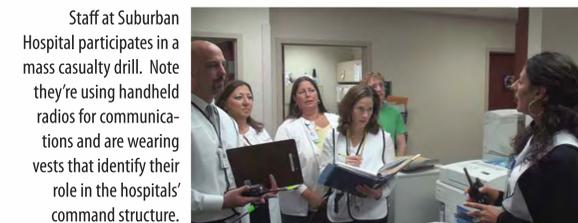
<http://nml.gov/ep>  
from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM)

## ACTIVITIES OF PARTNERS

- Foster information sharing and professional development in disaster preparedness, response and recovery through regular meetings.
- Use electronic and web communications to support efforts, especially the DISASTR-OUTREACH-LIB listserv.
- Support the information needs of the Bethesda Hospitals' Partnership. Coming soon: Web site for the Bethesda Hospitals' Emergency Preparedness Partnership.
- Support local disaster drills and preparedness for National Special Security Events (NSSEs).
- Exhibit at the National Naval Medical Center Disaster Training Conference for 2,000 attendees.
- Coordinate qualitative research on information needs of on-site responders to disasters.



Brittany Rice, Suburban Hospital Librarian, consults with Dr. Smith during a drill on characteristics of an unknown substance sickening disaster 'victims.' Brittany used WISER to identify sarin gas, a deadly nerve agent.



Staff at Suburban Hospital participates in a mass casualty drill. Note they're using handheld radios for communications and are wearing vests that identify their role in the hospitals' command structure.



"September is National Preparedness Month" at the NIH Library entrance. Exhibit by Alicia Livinski.



## RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the event of a disaster, partners know each other, can find each other, are familiar with each other's libraries and know what the partnership can offer each parent institution.

Communications are enhanced by using the email list at [list.nih.gov/archives/disastr-outreach-lib.html](http://list.nih.gov/archives/disastr-outreach-lib.html).

The process of developing an MOU can be kept simple. A concern for mutual disaster planning allows institutions to rise above their usual barriers to coordinating with each other and instead focus on the greater good.

