**Disaster Preparation for the Medical Office**

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Description

Disasters happen. They can be immediate and devastating with complete destruction or there may be a warning period before the event. Having a disaster preparedness plan in place is essential for your practice to manage and recover from a disaster. This presentation will provide practical recommendations for establishing a disaster program and plan for protecting your patients, your employees, and your practice before, during, and after the event.

* No amount of planning can ensure a perfect response to a disaster event.
  + Good planning may be decisive in survival.
* Allow enough time and effort to plan your disaster event response.
* Construct a disaster preparedness program.
  + Identify the threats to your practice and local area through risk assessments. Consider different types of disasters – natural, weather, man-made, facility-based, and public health emergencies.
  + Assess practice preparedness based on identified threats.
  + Construct a plan that is easy to understand and identifies roles and responsibilities of staff members. Include essential plan elements:
    - Medical information back up and access
    - Communication plans with patients, staff, other medical providers, and local/federal emergency response resources
    - Workforce roles (assigned by title and job description) and personal disaster planning
    - Preparation of the medical facility
    - Security of PHI
    - Evacuation planning
    - Evacuation recovery
    - Insurance coverage (review your policy and verify coverage)
    - Documentation of the plan
* Develop policies and procedures for disaster response.
  + Consider developing and using checklists for easy implementation of essential actions before and after a disaster.
  + Encourage input from staff members in the disaster planning process.
  + Encourage staff members to develop their own personal disaster plans.
* Provide training for staff upon hire and periodically on the disaster policies and procedures.
  + Tabletop exercises, group discussions, mock drills and other techniques could be incorporated into the training.
  + Best practices in training include testing of the disaster plan and practice implementing the plan.
* Periodically review your disaster preparedness program including assessments, plan, policies, procedures, and retraining.

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