

FIP recommendations for enhancing pharmacist-led supply chain management in disaster and emergency settings

To enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of healthcare delivery – including medicines and health supplies – during emergencies, particularly through pharmacist-led initiatives, pharmacists and professional pharmacy organisations should consider the following key guidance points. These recommendations emphasise proactive planning, training, regulatory frameworks, and collaborative efforts tailored specifically to pharmacists and pharmacy teams.

This guidance is useful for pharmacists, pharmacy teams and relevant stakeholders in regulation, government, industry and educational institutions.

1. Proactive communication and needs assessment

- **Engage with authorities:** Establish regular communication with government officials and civil society organisations before disasters occur. This ensures that the specific needs of affected populations are well understood and that the received donations are relevant and useful.
- **Understand the needs of the populations:** Regularly assess the healthcare needs of communities at risk of disasters to prepare tailored response strategies. This can help in identifying essential medicines and supplies required during emergencies.

2. Strengthening supplier relationships

- **Build reliable networks:** Develop strong relationships with suppliers and stakeholders in the pharmaceutical supply chain. Having predetermined contacts can facilitate quicker procurement processes during crises.
- **Understand regulatory frameworks:** Familiarise yourself with local and international regulations regarding the transportation of pharmaceuticals, including customs processes and necessary waivers to ensure compliance during emergencies. Explore also possible changes to practice during emergency situations.

3. Training and capacity building

- **Enhance pharmacist training:** Implement specialised training programmes for pharmacists and pharmacy teams focusing on disaster response, including operating mobile pharmacies, managing medication without prescriptions, and understanding good storage practices.
- **Anticipatory skills development:** Focus training on sharpening anticipatory action skills within supply chain management and issues such as power outages, staff management and other logistical aspects. This includes using historical data to predict potential crises and preparing stockpiles of essential supplies in advance.

4. Effective pharmacy preparedness plans

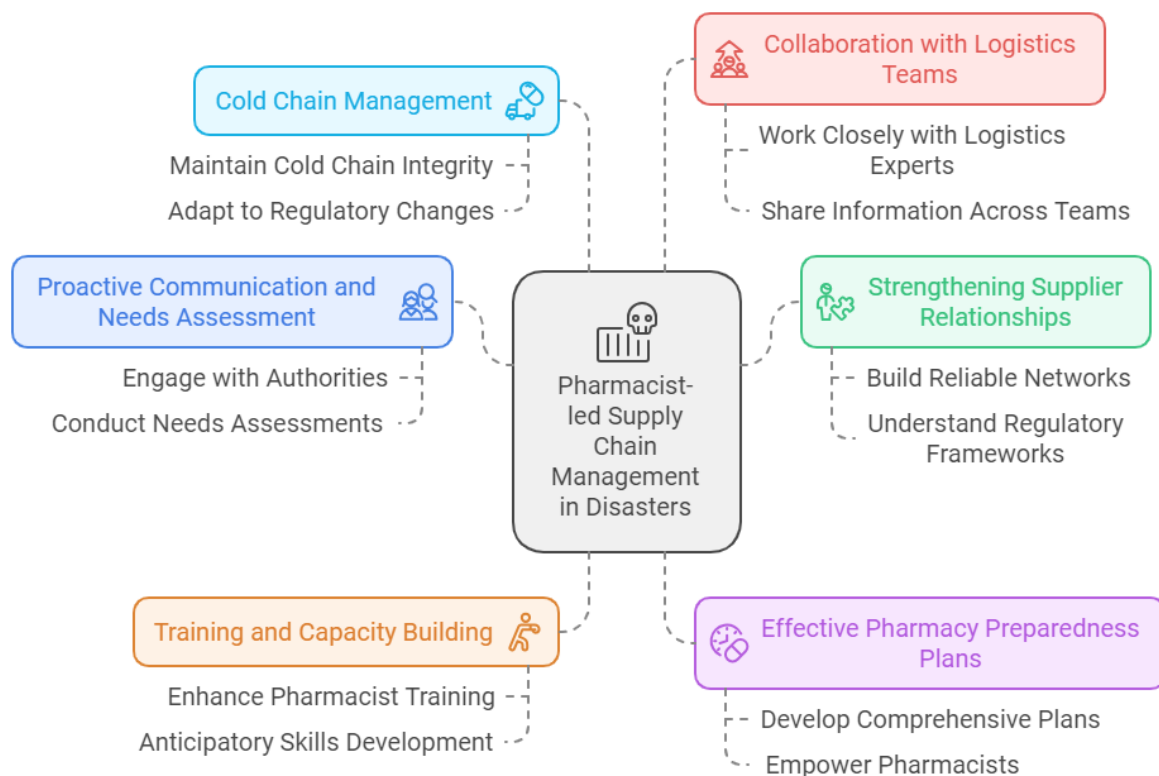
- **Develop comprehensive plans:** Create pharmacy preparedness plans that address potential supply chain interruptions, patient safety, and communication strategies with public health authorities. Regularly review and update these plans to adapt to emerging challenges.
- **Empower pharmacists:** Regulatory bodies should establish frameworks that empower pharmacists to make clinical decisions during crises, such as refilling prescriptions without prescriber authorization.

5. Cold chain management

- **Maintain cold chain integrity:** Ensure that systems are in place to monitor and maintain the integrity of cold chain logistics for temperature-sensitive medications, such as vaccines. This is crucial for their efficacy during humanitarian responses.

- **Adapt to regulatory changes:** Be prepared to adapt to changing regulations regarding medication expiration dates and handling controlled substances in crisis situations.
6. **Collaboration with other stakeholders that focus on logistics management**
- **Work closely with logistics experts:** Collaborate with logistics teams to ensure efficient supply chain management. This includes sharing information about efficient routes and good storage practices and distribution methods to maintain pharmaceutical quality.
 - **Share information across teams:** Ensure that all parties involved in the supply chain are informed about best practices for storage and distribution at various access points to maintain the quality of pharmaceuticals and other critical supplies.

Figure 1 - Summary of the main recommendations



By implementing these guidance points, FIP member organizations can significantly improve their supply chain management capabilities during disasters, ultimately leading to better healthcare outcomes for affected populations.

A set of flash cards is presented below, that can be used to raise awareness and provide quick messages on this topic.

If you need more information or have any queries about this document, please reach out to humanitarian@fip.org



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Summary of the main recommendations



How can proactive communication and needs assessment enhance disaster response?

- Establishing regular communication with government officials and aid organisations before disasters ensures that the specific needs of affected populations are understood and that the received donations are relevant and useful.
- Conducting regular healthcare needs assessments helps identify essential medicines and supplies, enabling tailored response strategies for at-risk communities.



What training and skills development are crucial for pharmacists in disaster settings?

- Specialised training in operating mobile pharmacies, managing medications without prescriptions, and good storage practices is vital.
- Additionally, focusing on anticipatory skills development using historical data can help pharmacists predict potential crises and prepare stockpiles of essential supplies in advance.



How can effective pharmacy preparedness plans support emergency responses?

- Preparedness plans should address potential supply chain interruptions, patient safety, and communication with public health authorities. Regular reviews ensure adaptation to emerging challenges.
- Empowering pharmacists through regulatory frameworks allows them to make clinical decisions, such as refilling prescriptions without prescriber authorisation.



How can strengthening supplier relationships aid response efforts in humanitarian settings?

- Developing reliable networks with suppliers and stakeholders facilitates quicker procurement during emergencies.
- Familiarity with local and international regulatory frameworks ensures smooth transportation of pharmaceuticals, including compliance with customs processes and emergency waivers.



Why is cold chain management critical in humanitarian responses?

- Maintaining cold chain integrity ensures the efficacy of temperature-sensitive medications, such as vaccines.
- Pharmacists should also be prepared to adapt to regulatory changes, including adjustments to medication expiration dates and handling controlled substances in crises.



How does collaboration with logistics teams improve supply chain efficiency?

- Working closely with logistics experts ensures efficient supply chain management, including proper storage, distribution, and maintaining pharmaceutical quality.
- Sharing best practices across teams enhances coordination and the overall effectiveness of humanitarian responses.



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