

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic: National Resource Prioritization Cell

Release Date: avr 18, 2020

The National Resource Prioritization Cell (NRPC) consists of interagency subject matter experts to address prioritization of limited critical medical supplies throughout the nation as part of the federal COVID-19 response. The cell uses a data-informed process to develop recommendations to ensure distribution of the right resources to the right places at the right times.

As part of the Whole-of-America response, FEMA and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) lead the coordination across our Nation's federal departments and agencies to identify shortfalls and overcome effects of COVID-19 nationwide. The National Resource Prioritization Cell addresses two necessary aspects of the federal COVID-19 pandemic response:

1. Execute solutions to address critical medical supplies and equipment needs
2. Stabilize the supply chain for personal protective equipment and other medical supplies

Resources Prioritization

The strategy to allocate medical supplies and equipment is based on COVID-19 disease activity and its effects, as well as the need to facilitate distribution of limited supplies to areas where resources are needed most urgently. Leveraging quantitative data sets provided by FEMA, HHS, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Resource Prioritization Cell combines these data streams, analyzes the available COVID-19 disease activity data to determine current and potential future areas that most urgently require resources. In the initial weeks of COVID-19 response, the team of experts worked through this process every 96 hours to ensure recommendations were driven by the most current data available amid rapidly changing needs across the country. With the recent national supply chain results, the process is now conducted every seven days.



The National Resource Prioritization Cell calculations provide the federal government with a data-informed list of at-risk areas and the current and near-future critical medical supply needs. The team provides proposals on resource distribution to the Unified Coordination Group (UCG) – comprised of HHS, CDC, FEMA, and White House Task Force – to develop a Resource Prioritization Bulletin. This bulletin informs private sector medical and surgical distributors on the latest priority jurisdictions in greatest need of specific medical supplies and equipment.

Prioritization Process

The HHS, CDC, and FEMA established a structured process to make resource prioritization recommendations. Every seven days the National Resource Prioritization Cell reviews and analyzes data sets including:

- Demographic information for population factors
- Internal supply data (donations and Strategic National Stockpile inventories)
- Supply chain data tower (private sector and FEMA distribution)
- Disease activities to include, but not limited to:
 - confirmed cases
 - increases in confirmed cases
 - total mortality
 - increases in mortality over seven days

The process steps are

Day 1

National Response Coordination Center (NRCC) identifies high demand and limited resources in need of national prioritization.

Members of the NRPC discuss the current data and modeling sources to understand what information analysis is available.

The Data and Analytics Task Force extracts identified datasets to give to the NRPC

Day 2



The NRPC determines which information is most reliable and weights variables to decide what information will be used to create recommendations for this cycle. The NRPC provides the Data and Analytics Task Force the weighting of the variables.

Day 3

The NRPC drafts a prioritization table based on the agreed upon factors and weights.

The prioritization table is reviewed, and subject matter experts apply operational judgment to adjust prioritization recommendations.

The NRPC briefs the recommended prioritization to the NRCC.

Day 4

The NRPC provides the recommended prioritization to the NRCC.

NRPC finalizes the prioritization table and provides the recommendations to the UCG.

Day 5-7

The prioritization bulletin is provided to the private sector for use in determining distribution of their supplies.

NRPC evaluates the effectiveness of the previous seven-day process and makes any adjustments to continually improve the process.

Supporting Long-term Supply Chain Resilience

The U.S. Government helps support healthcare system resilience by recommending strategic provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and medical equipment across the Nation with a focus on areas with the most urgent COVID-19 needs. This resilience can only be enhanced by accurate prediction and management of agile medical needs, as determined by actual, real-time COVID-19 effects.

Building resilience within, and providing for the rapid restoration of, the supply chain system is critical to any catastrophic incident response. Rebuilding a reliable



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supply chain during the COVID-19 response includes prioritizing and allocating critical supplies and equipment together with state, local, territorial, and tribal partners and private sector entities. FEMA works closely with its public and private sector partners to enable this Whole-of-America approach to respond to the pandemic and build a more resilient America.

*This fact sheet was updated on May 14, 2020



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