

FEMA Supply Chain Task Force Leads Four-Pronged Approach to Securing Needed Supplies and Equipment in COVID-19 Fight

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Whole-of-America COVID-19 Response Graphic

WASHINGTON – Closing the gap between what the private sector is able to provide to healthcare end-users and what is needed for the fight against COVID-19 is a key priority for the White House Coronavirus Task Force. In support of the task force, FEMA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services created a Supply Chain Stabilization Task Force, one of eight COVID-19 focused task forces under the National Response Coordination Center (NRCC). This task force is taking a whole-of-America approach to address limited supply of critical protective and life-saving equipment.

The task force's primary effort is the sourcing of personal protective equipment (PPE), ventilators and other critical resources to requested by states, tribes and territories.

By using the structure of FEMA's NRCC, the task force is finding and executing solutions to meet urgent demand and enable the U.S. Government to surge support to COVID-19 "hot spots" as they arise.

The strategy is executed through a four-pronged approach: Preservation, Acceleration, Allocation and Expansion to accelerate and expand the pipeline of medical supplies and equipment.

The first prong represents a critical whole-of-America effort: **Preservation** of current supplies. The reuse of PPE can quickly expand the capacity to meet the existing needs. It's important that the medical community follows Centers for Disease Control guidelines for the proper use of PPE to including reuse guidance.



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The task force is in the process of developing and verifying techniques to clean and recycle PPE.

Second, **Acceleration** of industrial manufacturing is required to meet the urgent market demand. Manufacturers are ramping up production of critical resources and have extended operating hours to increase production above their standard levels. A rapid acquisition process by the joint FEMA-HHS contracting team was established to evaluate and act on solicitations. FEMA is also expediting movement of critical supplies from the global market to medical distributors in various locations across the U.S.

As an example of this effort, FEMA coordinated an air bridge for flights from Asia beginning Sunday, March 29 which delivered 80 tons of much needed PPE supplies to New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. The second flight landed in Chicago this morning and FEMA is scheduling more daily. Each flight will contain critical PPE (gloves, gowns, goggles, and masks) in varying quantities. FEMA will not have detailed visibility on the amount of PPE until the flights are loaded overseas.

Upon arrival, PPE will be provided, in varying quantities, first to medical distributors in areas of greatest need; then, the remainder will be infused into the broader U.S. supply chain. Prioritization will be given to hospitals, health care facilities, and nursing homes around the country. Additionally, in some cases, the federal government may purchase some of the supplies to be used to replenish the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) or to provide to states with any identified and unmet needs.

Third, **Expansion** of the industry is also taking place in manufacturing. Manufacturers are enhancing production capacity with additional machinery or re-tooling assembly lines to produce new products needed in the fight against the virus. The task force is engaging manufacturers, distributors and healthcare networks to build the next phase of supply chain stabilization.

Fourth, **Allocation** of critical resources focuses on ensuring the right quantities of supplies get to the right place, at the right time. Using a data-driven distribution approach that considers demand and supply ensures resources go where they are most needed. FEMA is focusing allocation of critical resources to areas experiencing the greatest increase in COVID-19 cases with the largest forecast



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capacity shortfalls. This approach also considers the at-risk population distribution across the Nation.

To make effective decisions about resources, a National Resource Prioritization Cell was established to unify government and private industry prioritization recommendations. These recommendations will further inform federal, state and private sector operations.

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Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic: Supply Chain Stabilization Task Force

The Supply Chain Stabilization Task Force is executing a whole-of-America approach to address limited supply of critical protective and life-saving equipment. Through a four-prong approach of *Preservation, Acceleration, Expansion* and *Allocation*, FEMA is bringing the full capacity of the Federal government to bear to find solutions to protect the American people and defeat COVID-19.

Locating Available Critical Resources

The task force's primary effort is to increase the flow of medical supplies and equipment to healthcare workers on the front line. Through the National Response Coordination Center, the task force is working to find critical resources to meet urgent demand as well as increase the overall level of surge support to "hot spots" as they arise. In addition, the task force is engaging manufacturers, distributors and healthcare networks to increase supply chain long-term.

Increasing Availability of Critical Resources

The Supply Chain Stabilization Task Force is executing a four-pronged approach to rapidly increase supply today and expand domestic production of critical resources to increase supply long-term.



Preservation

Preservation to extend the life of PPE and other supplies. Developing guidance to prioritize the allocation and the most appropriate use of supplies for specific needs are critical components of this strategy.

- The task force is in the process of developing and verifying techniques to clean and recycle products.
- This line of effort also includes developing guidance to prioritize the allocation and the most appropriate use of supplies for specific needs, critical components of this strategy.
- The task force is also working to expand equipment resources through the Preservation line of effort. The FDA issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for ventilators on March 24, which allows anesthesia gas machines and positive pressure breathing devices to be modified for use as ventilators. The new guidance will also assist health care personnel on how to use other ventilators, like CPAP devices for sleep apnea, with COVID-19 patients in respiratory distress, as well as on shelf life of existing ventilators.

Acceleration

Acceleration of the commercial market is required to help meet the urgent demand. Manufacturers are ramping up production and shipment of critical resources and have extended operating hours to increase production well above pre-COVID-19 levels.

- To expedite purchasing, FEMA issued a request for quotation for vendors who have needed medical equipment and supplies to sell to the agency.
- FEMA is also expediting movement of critical supplies from the global market to medical distributors in various locations across the U.S.
- As an example of this effort, Project Airbridge was created to shorten the amount of time it takes for U.S. medical supply distributors to get Personal Protective Equipment and other critical supplies into the country and to their respective customers.
- FEMA is doing this by covering the cost to fly supplies into the U.S. from overseas factories, cutting the amount of time it takes to ship supplies from months to days. Each flight contains critical PPE (gloves, gowns, goggles, and



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masks) in varying quantities.

- As part of the current agreement with distributors, 50 percent of the supplies on each plane are targeted by the distributors to customers in areas of greatest need. These areas are determined by HHS and FEMA based on CDC data.
- The remainder is being infused into the broader U.S. supply chain. Prioritization is given to hospitals, health care facilities, and nursing homes around the country.
- In some cases, the federal government may purchase some of the supplies to provide to states with any identified and unmet needs.
- To address the anticipated ventilator shortage across the nation, the task force has also implemented a strategy to leverage the strengths of the commercial industry including numerous vendors, such as General Electric, Phillips, Medtronic, Hamilton, Zoll, ResMed, Hillrom and Vyair, to produce 20,000 ventilators over the next two months with the potential to add 100,000 by end of June. This represents a significant increase in velocity as the normal annual market is 30,000 per year.

Expansion

Expansion of the industry is also taking place. Manufacturers are enhancing production capacity with additional machinery, and in some cases re-tooling assembly lines to produce new products needed.

- As an example of this work, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is providing information for manufacturers on adding production lines or alternative sites, like automobile manufacturers, for making more ventilators during the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- In addition, the task force is working through over 350 leads to match American businesses who have excess raw materials, workforce or factory production capacity combined with an overwhelming desire to provide their support to the national response effort.
 - Task force members are actively working to facilitate the creation of private sector partnerships to pair companies that have volunteered excess factory production capacity, the talents of their workforce and access to their raw material supply chains with critical supply manufacturers who have the expertise in producing PPE, ventilator and other needed equipment.



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- The creation of these partnerships to align capacity with know-how will unleash the potential engine of our national private sector and help overcome the supply shortfalls.

Allocation

Allocation of critical resources based on data-informed decisions to get the right quantities of supplies to the right place, at the right time.

- Because FEMA owns very little medical supplies and the commercial marketplace supports the healthcare and first responder communities today, there is a need to provide commercial supply chain data to FEMA.
- To more effectively adjudicate resources throughout the nation and private industry, a National Resource Prioritization Cell was established to unify government and private industry prioritization recommendations which will inform federal, state and private sector operations.
- The Supply Chain Task Force is working with the major commercial distributors to facilitate the rapid distribution of critical resources in short supply to locations where they are needed most.
 - This partnership enables FEMA and its federal partners to take a whole-of-America approach to combatting COVID-19. FEMA, in coordination with other federal agencies, is providing distributors with up-to-date information on the locations across the country hardest hit by COVID-19 or in most need of resources now and in the future.
 - The distributors have agreed to focus portions of their distributions on these areas in order to alleviate the suffering of the American people.
- Working together, we are able to efficiently distribute these vital resources to hospitals, nursing homes, long-term care facilities, pre-hospital medical services, state and local governments, and other facilities critical to caring for the American people during this pandemic.

