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Enabling Action in the Face of Uncertainty: Using Crisis Management Drills as a Scalable Approach to Increasing Enterprise Resilience

In healthcare, where operations are complex and intertwined, it is essential that organizations are flexible and can respond to unexpected issues as they arise. The key features of High Reliability Organizations (HROs), such as a commitment to resilience and preoccupation with failure, make them an excellent model for addressing this need. NYU Langone Health (NYULH) is dedicated to maintaining sustained high levels of safety, quality, and efficiency. The Emergency Management and Enterprise Resilience (EM+ER) department helps contribute to this goal through creative approaches designed to increase enterprise resilience.

One such approach is the use of Crisis Management Drills (CMDs). These focus on empowering front-line staff to take effective action in a crisis. The key aim of the program is to build muscle-memory around crisis decision-making, reinforce the appropriate processes, and increase awareness of available resources. Because emergencies have a direct impact on patient quality of care, NYULH goes to great lengths to ensure that staff are equipped to manage crises effectively. Ultimately, the CMD program is designed to foster preparation and resilience while aiding in service recovery after unavoidable events.

Monthly, EM+ER designs a two-page CMD to cover a scenario chosen based on the results from the enterprise's Hazard Vulnerability Analysis. Scenarios range from utility failure to violent intruders and are designed to provide a no-fault learning environment where staff work through the actions they would take in response to the event. The drills are led by unit or department leaders, allowing for a scalable approach to training, with approximately 660 staff trained each month. Initially focused on clinical units, the program is expanding to include support departments in order to account for the possibility of events that affect the entire enterprise. Thus, CMDs provide NYULH with a scalable method of enabling action in the face of uncertainty.

Presentation Theme: The project reflects best practices around scalable training for frontline staff, with an aim to increase organizational resilience.

Collaborators, Advisor(s) and Department(s) that assisted with this research: Alex Resnick (Manager), Emergency Management and Enterprise Resilience (EM+ER) department at NYU Langone Health