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Post-Acute and Specialty Care Settings: An Untapped Resource in Healthcare Emergency Management

Healthcare emergencies demand coordinated, system-wide responses that maximize available resources. While acute care facilities remain central to healthcare response frameworks, post-acute settings represent an underutilized asset in comprehensive preparedness. This poster examines how these facilities require adapted emergency preparedness planning, response, and recovery strategies.

The proposed framework repositions post-acute care as active contributors rather than passive recipients in emergency response. Their distinctive operational characteristics-including rehabilitation-focused resources and community-based care networks-necessitate specialized planning models that diverge from traditional protocols. Their established relationships with acute care networks create natural pathways for patient flow management during disasters.

By integrating these settings into emergency planning while acknowledging their operational differences, healthcare systems can develop more robust, flexible response mechanisms. This approach transforms current emergency management paradigms from linear, hospital-centric models to

networked systems that leverage all available healthcare assets. This poster outlines practical implementation strategies that address these operational distinctions and showcase the transformative potential of an integrated approach.

Presentation Theme: This presentation draws from real-world implementation and case studies showcasing how Spaulding Rehabilitation, as a member of Mass General Brigham, has operationalized solutions that address the unique challenges of post-acute and rehabilitation settings during emergencies while enhancing overall healthcare system resilience. Centered around a concept of resilience through integration, this presentation offers practical experience that demonstrates the value of incorporating specialized post-acute capabilities into broader emergency management frameworks in an environment of significant capacity challenges and operational headwinds.

Collaborators, Advisor(s) and Department(s) that assisted with this research: Mass General Brigham Department of Emergency Preparedness and Business Continuity