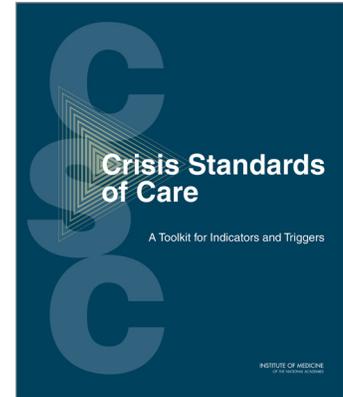


# Crisis Standards of Care

## A Toolkit for Indicators and Triggers



**Disasters and public health emergencies** can stress health care systems to the breaking point and disrupt delivery of vital medical services. During such crises, hospitals and long-term care facilities may be without power; trained staff, ambulances, medical supplies, and beds could be in short supply; and alternate care facilities may need to be used. Planning for these situations is necessary to provide the best possible health care during a crisis and, if needed, equitably allocate scarce resources.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) has produced two other reports on crisis standards of care: *Guidance for Establishing Crisis Standards of Care for Use in Disaster Situations* (2009) and *Crisis Standards of Care: A Systems Framework for Catastrophic Disaster Response* (2012). These reports contain key concepts, guidance, and practical resources to help actors across the emergency response system—including federal, state, and local governments; public health agencies; emergency medical services; emergency management and public safety agencies; hospitals; and out-of-hospital health care organizations and agencies—develop plans for crisis standards of care and response to a catastrophic disaster.

In this third report, *Crisis Standards of Care: A Toolkit for Indicators and Triggers*, an IOM committee examines indicators and triggers that guide the implementation of crisis standards of care and provides a discussion toolkit to help stakeholders establish indicators and triggers for their own communities. The report was developed at the request of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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The Department of Veterans Affairs

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

**For practical resources and more information on the IOM's work on crisis standards of care, visit [www.iom.edu/crisisstandards](http://www.iom.edu/crisisstandards)**

## Developing Indicators and Triggers and a Discussion Toolkit

Together, indicators and triggers help guide operational decision making about providing care during public health and medical emergencies and disasters. The committee defines **indicators** as measurements or predictors of change in demand for health care services or availability of resources. **Triggers** are decision points about adaptations to health care service delivery. Good decision-making approaches will help the emergency response system take proactive steps and use resources effectively to provide the best possible care given the circumstances.

This report contains a discussion toolkit that is designed to help stakeholders develop indicators and triggers customized for their own organizations, agencies, and jurisdictions. The toolkit contains scenarios, key questions, and examples of indicators, triggers, and tactics to help prompt discussion. In addition to common elements designed to facilitate integrated planning, the toolkit contains chapters specifically customized for emergency management, public health, behavioral health, emergency medical services, hospital and acute care, and out-of-hospital care.

The development of crisis standards of care plans, including indicators and triggers, is currently being emphasized in HHS cooperative agreements that fund public health and medical preparedness across the nation—specifically, the Hospital Preparedness Program and the Public Health Emergency Preparedness cooperative agreements. This report will help stakeholders develop plans that meet the capabilities and performance measures described in these programs. 

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