

# Crs Report for Congress: The Public Health and Medical Response to Disasters: Federal Authority and Funding: August 1, 2008 - RL33579



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Congressional Research Service: The Library of Congress, Sarah A. Lister

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Bibliogov, United States, 2013. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 246 x 189 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book \*\*\*\*\* Print on Demand \*\*\*\*\*.When there is a catastrophe in the United States, state and local governments lead response activities, invoking state and local legal authorities to support these activities. When state and local response capabilities are overwhelmed, the President, acting through the Secretary of Homeland Security, can provide assistance to stricken communities, individuals, governments, and not-for-profit groups to assist in response and recovery. Aid is provided under the authority of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (the Stafford Act) upon a presidential declaration. The Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) also has both standing and emergency authorities in the Public Health Service Act, by which he or she can provide assistance in response to public health and medical emergencies. At this time, however, the Secretary has limited means to finance activities that are ineligible, for whatever reason, for Stafford Act assistance. The flawed response to Hurricane Katrina, and preparedness efforts for an influenza ( flu ) pandemic, have each raised concerns about existing federal response mechanisms for incidents that result in overwhelming public health and medical needs. These concerns include the delegation of responsibilities among different federal departments, and whether critical conflicts or gaps exist in these relationships. In particular, .

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