Supply Chain Preparedness Priorities

HIDA successfully advocated for numerous supply chain policies to be included in the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Innovation Act (PAHPAI). It is now critical for Congress to provide funding for key programs at the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) which will support the implementation of these priorities.

Specifically, HIDA worked with Congress to include provisions that support a more elastic healthcare supply chain as well as ensure continued collaboration with the private sector in planning and responding to public health events in PAHPAI. Implementation of these policies depend on adequate funding. Appropriators need to provide the ASPR with the necessary resources to strengthen public and private partnerships before, during, and after public health emergencies.

Medical products are critical to any emergency or pandemic response. HIDA has collaborated with policymakers on concepts to create a "cushion" of key products. As part of PAHPAI, Congress updated the parameters regarding the coordination of preparedness for and response to all-hazards public health emergencies to include ancillary medical supplies. The legislation specifically states the ASPR must:

"identify and prioritize near-, mid-, and long-term needs with respect to such countermeasures or products, and ancillary medical supplies to assist with the utilization of such products, to address a chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threat or threats."

Additionally, as part of the Secretary's threat-based review and assessment of the stockpile, shall take into account:

"planning considerations for appropriate manufacturing capacity and capability to meet goals of such additions or modifications... including consideration of the effect such additions or modifications may have on the availability of such products and ancillary medical supplies in the health care system"

Furthermore, a plan must be devised:

"for effective and timely supply-chain management of the stockpile, in consultation... appropriate Federal agencies; State, local, Tribal, and territorial agencies; and the public and private health care infrastructure, as applicable, taking into account the manufacturing capacity and other available sources of products and appropriate alternatives to supplies in the stockpile."

Strategic National Stockpile (SNS): The SNS manages and delivers life-saving medical countermeasures (MCMs) during a public health emergency and is the largest federally owned repository of critical medical supplies.

HIDA supports funding levels of $610 million for SNS
Develop communication pathways to allow vital access and create re-entry processes during response activities.

Additionally, the bill seeks to provide guidelines for hospitals, healthcare facilities, and other public and private sector entities in order to increase medical surge capacity before, during, and after public health emergencies. Language in the bill directs the ASPR to inform and educate:
“appropriate first responders and health care supply chain partners of the regional emergency preparedness and response capabilities and medical surge capacity of such hospitals and health care facilities in the community.”

Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP): HPP funding enables ASPR to develop and maintain public-private partnerships at the federal, state, and local level which focus on and improve preparedness and response for healthcare systems.

HIDA supports funding levels of $385 million for HPP. This includes an additional $10 million for the Regional Disaster Health Response System (RDHRS) and is consistent with current appropriations. This funding will help in communication and coordination across agencies including the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS). This increased communication will link capabilities and contribute to a more integrated response.

Create a “national contingency healthcare system” so the supply chain can divert product where needed most.

Coordination and communication between public and private entities is crucial to ensuring the healthcare supply chain is recognized as an essential partner during preparedness and response activities. This recognition allows for the transportation of lifesaving medical products across the same roads as emergency vehicles during emergency road closures (known as re-entry). Section 302 of PAHPAI addresses Health System Infrastructure to Improve Preparedness and response. In this section, the legislation specifically addresses coordination to improve preparedness. The language in the bill reads:
“Logistical support shall include working with other relevant Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial public health officials and private sector entities to identify the critical infrastructure assets, systems, and networks needed for the proper functioning of the health care and public health sectors that need to be maintained through any emergency or disaster.”

Under HPP discussed above, the Critical Infrastructure Protection program coordinates HHS’s role in managing the complex network of staff, supplies, systems, and space to provide care during public health emergencies.