



**Hospital Preparedness Program / Health Care Readiness and Recovery (HCRR)  
Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR)  
Public Health & Social Services Emergency Fund (PHSSEF)  
FY 2026 Labor HHS Appropriations Bill**

	<b>FY 2024</b>	<b>FY 2025</b>	<b>FY 2026 President's Request</b>	<b>FY 2026 TFAH</b>
Health Care Readiness and Recovery Funding Line (ASPR)	\$305,055,000	N/A	N/A	\$500,000,000

**Background:** Ensuring the healthcare system is equipped to continue care during emergencies is a significant challenge, compounding the strain healthcare facilities face every day. Workforce shortages and hospital closures are disrupting how people receive care, especially in rural and underserved areas. The Health Care Readiness and Recovery programs—administered by the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR)—strengthens the readiness of the healthcare delivery system to provide coordinated, lifesaving care in the face of disasters and other emergencies.

One crucial foundation for healthcare readiness is the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP), which funds a total of 62 recipients across all 50 states, U.S. territories, freely associated states, and in Los Angeles County, Chicago, New York City, and Washington, D.C. HPP is the primary source of federal funding for healthcare delivery system preparedness and response across the country. HPP builds resilience in the healthcare delivery system by increasing its ability to operate and provide care during a disaster, saving lives and ensuring the earliest possible recovery of the system. The HCRR funding line that supports HPP also funds other related programs and activities, such as the Regional Disaster Health Response System (RDHRS) and the National Special Pathogen System (NSPS).

**Impact:** The HCRR programs and activities help the health care delivery system across the country overcome the complex challenges associated with disaster healthcare. HPP is a core component of HCRR and supports regional healthcare coalitions (HCCs) – networks of public and private health care organizations, emergency management, public health agencies, emergency medical services, and other partners – to increase medical surge capacity, coordinate resource allocation, and leverage strong partnerships across the healthcare continuum during an emergency. The cooperative agreements support 318 HCCs with 47,836 participating entities from across the health system, including 94 percent of all U.S. acute care hospitals and 98 percent of public health agencies. Meaningful participation of health care entities in coalitions means that when disaster strikes, systems are in place to coordinate the response. HCCs support managing patient movement, communicating situational awareness, educating and training the health care workforce, conducting exercises, and providing resource-sharing across healthcare entities to maintain clinical care delivery. Collectively, these actions enable the healthcare system to save lives and protect communities in emergencies.

Recent success stories include:

- **North Carolina:** Following Hurricane Helene, the Eastern Healthcare Preparedness Coalition provided disaster assistance to hospitals and communities in western North Carolina. This support included deployment of a medical ambulance bus, healthcare staffing support, logistical support, and supply management, and technology and communications support.<sup>1</sup>
- **Oklahoma:** Regional Medical Response System (RMRS), the lead agency for one of Oklahoma's six health care coalitions (HCCs), coordinated the healthcare response to the 18 tornadoes that hit central Oklahoma on April 19, 2023. The coalition coordinated with hospitals, emergency medical services, public health, and long-term care facilities to respond to the disaster. The coalition identified needs at local healthcare facilities and helped coordinate an immediate evacuation and safe relocation of 79 residents of a nursing home facility that had sustained damage in the storms. Not a single resident of the facility was injured.<sup>2</sup>
- **South Carolina:** The South Carolina Lowcountry Healthcare Coalition and partners developed an app connecting individuals with End Stage Renal Disease to resources to help them find treatment during a disaster. Since its launch in 2022, the app has issued 49 notifications to users about natural disasters and has expanded to 12 additional states.<sup>3</sup>

**Recommendation:** TFAH recommends \$500 million for FY 2026 for the HCRR funding line to help rebuild the programs from years of underfunding. The increases would be used for:

- Increased funding to the HPP cooperative agreement, based on the current formula. Such increases have a larger impact on states with smaller public health budgets. The drastic cuts experienced by the program have led to decreased capacity and a wide variation in capabilities from state to state.
- Building capacity of HPP recipients and their HCC subrecipients and health care partners to be more adequately prepared for infectious diseases outbreaks, including strengthening HPP coordination with the National Special Pathogen System.
- Addressing major gaps in health system preparedness, such as readiness of emergency medical services and medical transport systems. Effective medical transport is especially a concern in rural areas that have experienced hospital closures in recent years.
- Implementing the National Special Pathogen System Strategy and continuing to build special pathogen preparedness and response capacity across health systems in the U.S.
- Continuing to fund the Regional Disaster Health Response System (RDHRS) sites, which have already helped partnership members address health care preparedness challenges in its regional, tiered framework to build a nationwide response system and identifying and scaling health care readiness innovations.

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<sup>1</sup> ECU Health, 2024. Eastern Healthcare Preparedness Coalition, ECU Health continue support of Hurricane Helene recovery efforts.

<https://www.ecuhealth.org/eastern-healthcare-preparedness-coalition-ecu-health-continue-support-of-hurricane-helene-recovery-efforts/>

<sup>2</sup>ASPR, 2023. Oklahoma Health Care Coalition Coordinates with Key Response Partners to Relocate Nursing Home Patients After Central Oklahoma Tornadoes. <https://aspr.hhs.gov/HealthCareReadiness/StoriesfromtheField/Pages/Stories/OK-HCC-Coordinates-Nursing-Home-Relocation.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> ASPR 2023. HPP-Supported App Now Provides Lifesaving Resources to Individuals with End Stage Renal Disease in 13 States <https://aspr.hhs.gov/HealthCareReadiness/StoriesfromtheField/Pages/Stories/HPP-Supported-App-Provides-Lifesaving-Resources-to-ESRD-Patients.aspx>