



Health Resources and Services Administration
Healthcare Systems Bureau
Division of Healthcare Preparedness
ESAR-VHP Program
5600 Fishers Lane
Room 13C-05
Rockville, MD 20857

October 31, 2006

Dear State ESAR-VHP Coordinator:

Attached is the draft ESAR-VHP compliance document that will be of critical importance to the development of your State ESAR-VHP program. At the May 2006 NBHPP and ESAR-VHP meetings in Denver, both Robin Funston and I noted that HRSA would be issuing compliance requirements for State and Territorial ESAR-VHP programs. These draft compliance requirements are essential to ensuring an effective source of health professionals for local, State, inter-State, and/or Federal emergency response. The issuance of these draft compliance requirements also meets HRSA's charge in the President's Pandemic Flu Implementation plan to define the core operating components of an ESAR-VHP program.

Compliance requirements address three areas of program development: 1) electronic database requirements; 2) operations requirements necessary to effectively use an electronic database, manage volunteer health professionals in an emergency, and retain volunteers in the system; and 3) evaluation and reporting requirements. Status reporting on the requirements will begin with the December 2006 NBHPP report.

As we announce these draft compliance requirements, we recognize that meeting them requires a joint effort from the State programs and the HRSA ESAR-VHP program. Thus, we are also announcing several activities that will provide significant resources to assist each State and Territory in meeting these requirements. The mechanisms the ESAR-VHP program has put in place to do this are:

1. A contract with the non-profit policy research firm, Altarum Institute, for significant technical and operational assistance, including the potential for short-term staff assistance, to develop implementation and operational plans for each State and Territory. States that are farther along in development may utilize technical assistance for any compliance requirement related activity.
2. A contract with Quality Resource Systems, Inc. to provide access for all States and Territories to national sources of verified credential information for physicians, nurses, and other professionals.
3. A contract with Fleishman-Hillard, the international public relations firm, for the development of coordinated National and State public education, marketing, and recruitment plans and materials.


In addition, we will continue to revise the ESAR-VHP Guidelines and will soon be releasing a new edition with clarified information on the verified credentials required to assign ESAR-VHP levels to 20 professions, as well as master variable specifications. We also will continue to provide legal and regulatory information through our contract with the Center for Law and the Public's Health.

The draft compliance requirements will be subject to an OMB-mandated public review and comment period, together with the entire ESAR-VHP Guidelines document, when that document approaches completion. We expect this will take place in Spring 2007. Until that time, please feel free to provide your comments regarding the compliance requirements to myself or any member of the ESAR-VHP staff.

We are in the process of planning conference calls to discuss the compliance requirements. We also are planning meetings that will give you an opportunity to meet the contractors available to help you develop ESAR-VHP compliant programs. We will announce a schedule for these conference calls and meetings shortly, and we will be sure to provide enough advance notice for all to plan to participate.

Again, the entire ESAR-VHP staff is pleased to take questions or concerns you may have regarding the draft compliance requirements, and we look forward to hearing your feedback.
Best regards.

Sincerely,



Christopher J. McLaughlin
Director, ESAR-VHP Program

attachment

Emergency Systems for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) Draft Compliance Requirements

October 31, 2006

The following draft ESAR-VHP compliance requirements identify capabilities and procedures that State¹ ESAR-VHP programs must have in place to ensure effective management and inter-jurisdictional movement of volunteer health personnel in emergencies. Each compliance requirement includes timeframes by which States must meet the requirement. States that received supplemental ESAR-VHP funding in phase one, together with the top ten population States, must meet the timeframes designated for Category A². States that received supplemental funding in phases two or three, except for the top ten population States, must meet the timeframes designated for Category B³. All States will be required to report progress toward meeting these compliance requirements on Mid-Year and End-of-Year Progress Reports for the National Bioterrorism Hospital Preparedness Program.

I. ESAR-VHP Electronic System Requirements

1. Each State is required to develop an electronic system for managing volunteer data based on the data definitions and schema to be presented in the HRSA *ESAR-VHP Guidelines*. Electronic systems must be built to current industry standards for security and protection of sensitive information, and must include requirements for redundancy. These electronic systems must be able to:
 - a) Offer secure WWW-based registration (low population States may not be required to meet this compliance element).
 - b) Maintain ESAR-VHP credential information in a secure electronic format.
 - c) Identify volunteers via queries of critical variables.
 - d) Generate electronic data files in a secure format that can be interpreted and used by other jurisdictions managing volunteers.
 - e) Track volunteers during deployment and track deployment history of volunteers.

Timeframes for Compliance:

Category A States must meet these requirements by August 2007 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2007.

Category B States must meet these requirements by August 2008 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2008.

¹ For purpose of this document, State refers to any National Bioterrorism Hospital Preparedness Program grantee, including States, Territories, Cities, Counties, the District of Columbia, Commonwealths, or the sovereign nations of Palau, Marshall Islands, and Federated States of Micronesia.

² Category A includes: CT, DC, MN, IL, MA, MO, OH, TX, WV, WI, CA, Los Angeles County, NY, New York City, FL, PA, MI, GA, NJ, and Chicago

³ Category B includes: AL, HI, KS, MD, NE, NV, NH, NM, NC, OK, OR, VA, WA, AK, AZ, AR, CO, DE, ID, IN, IA, KY, LA, ME, MS, MT, ND, RI, SC, SD, TN, VT, WY, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Marianas Islands, Marshall Islands, American Samoa, Palau, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands

2. Each electronic system must be able to register and collect verified credentials of health professionals.
 - a) Each State is required to register and collect verified credentials for the following priority professions identified in the *ESAR-VHP Guidelines* to be released in late 2006.
 - 1) Physicians
 - 2) Registered Nurses, including Advanced Practice Registered Nurses
 - 3) Pharmacists
 - 4) Psychologists
 - 5) Clinical Social Workers
 - 6) Mental Health Counselors
 - 7) Radiologic Technologists
 - 8) Respiratory Therapists
 - 9) Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians
 - 10) Licensed Practical Nurses

Timeframes for Compliance:

Category A States must meet these requirements by August 2007 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2007.

Category B States must meet these requirements by August 2008 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2008.

- b) Each State is required to register and collect verified credentials for the additional priority professions identified in the *ESAR-VHP Guidelines* to be released in Spring 2007.

Timeframes for Compliance:

Category A States must meet these requirements by February 2008 and report on compliance in the Mid-Year Progress Report, due in April 2008.

Category B States must meet these requirements by February 2009 and report on compliance in the Mid-Year Progress Report due in April 2009.

- c) States must add additional priority professions to their systems as they are added to future versions of the *ESAR-VHP Guidelines*. Timeframes for compliance will be based on the release date of the *ESAR-VHP Guidelines*.

3. The ESAR-VHP system must be able to collect verified credentials and assign volunteers to one of four ESAR-VHP credential levels based on the verified credentials collected.

Each State is required to develop a system capable of assigning volunteers to all four ESAR-VHP credential levels as defined in the *ESAR-VHP Guidelines*.

Timeframes for Compliance:

Category A States must meet these requirements by February 2008 and report on compliance in the Mid-Year Progress Report due April 2008.

Category B States must meet these requirements by February 2009 and report on compliance in the Mid-Year Progress Report due April 2009.

4. Each electronic system must be able to record ALL volunteer organizations that a given volunteer is affiliated with, including organizations at the local, State, and Federal level.

To eliminate redundancy and the potential for a volunteer appearing in multiple registration systems, each State must be able to identify and record all affiliations that registered volunteers have with other volunteer organizations (e.g., Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) units, National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) teams, and State emergency response teams).

Timeframes for Compliance:

Category A States must meet these requirements by August 2007 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2007.

Category B States must meet these requirements by August 2008 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2008.

5. Each electronic system must be able to identify volunteers willing to participate in a Federally coordinated emergency response.
 - a) Each electronic system must query volunteers upon initial registration and/or re-verification of credentials about their willingness to participate in emergency responses coordinated by the Federal government. Responses to this question, posed in advance of an emergency, will provide the Federal government with a rough count of the potential volunteer pool that may be available from the States upon request.
 - b) If a volunteer responds “Yes” to the Federal question, additional information may be required of the volunteer. Each electronic system must have the ability to collect information about each volunteer’s training, physical and medical status, and criminal background history. The master variable specifications in the *ESAR-VHP Guidelines* will identify any additional data elements that need to be collected.

Timeframe for Compliance:

Each State must meet this requirement when its ESAR-VHP system becomes operational.

6. Each State must be able to collect personal and verified information about a volunteer's credentials on a recurring basis.

Each State is required to re-collect personal information and re-verify credential information for each volunteer every 6 months.

Timeframes for Compliance:

Category A States must meet these requirements by February 2008 and report on compliance in the Mid-Year Progress Report due April 2008.

Category B States must meet these requirements by February 2009 and report on compliance in the Mid-Year Progress Report due April 2009.

Note: HRSA will review this requirement regularly for possible adjustments based on the experience of the States.

7. Each State must ensure that volunteers meet minimal requirements for inclusion as an ESAR-VHP volunteer.

Each State must ensure that potential volunteers are not included on the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Inspector General's List of Excluded Individuals/Entities (LEIE).

Timeframe for Compliance:

Each State must meet this requirement when its ESAR-VHP system becomes operational.

II. ESAR-VHP Operational Requirements

8. Upon receipt of a request for volunteers from any source, all States must: 1) identify appropriate volunteers, 2) contact potential volunteers, and 3) within 12 hours respond with an initial list of volunteers willing to participate.

Timeframe for Compliance:

Each State must meet this requirement when its ESAR-VHP system becomes operational.

9. All States are required to develop and implement a plan to recruit and retain volunteers.
 - a) Each State is required to develop a plan to recruit and retain volunteers. HRSA will assist States in meeting this requirement by developing a National public education campaign and tools for accessing state enrollment sites. HRSA will

provide professional assistance to each State to develop customized recruitment and retention plans. This will be carried out in conjunction with existing recruitment and retention practices utilized by the State.

Timeframes for Compliance:

Category A States must meet these requirements by August 2007 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2007.

Category B States must meet these requirements by August 2008 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2008.

- b) Each State is required to implement its plan to recruit and retain volunteers. HRSA will assist States in meeting this requirement by providing professional assistance to the States. This will be carried out in conjunction with existing recruitment and retention practices utilized by the State.

Timeframes for Compliance:

Category A States must meet these requirements by August 2008 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2009.

Category B States must meet these requirements by August 2009 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2010.

10. Each State must develop a plan for coordinating with all State health professional volunteer response organizations.

To ensure an efficient response to an emergency, each State ESAR-VHP program must coordinate with all other State and local organizations for utilizing health professional volunteers, including but not limited to Medical Reserve Corps units, State emergency management teams, and National Disaster Medical System teams.

Timeframes for Compliance:

Category A States must meet these requirements by August 2007 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2007.

Category B States must meet these requirements by August 2008 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2008.

11. Each State must develop protocols for deploying volunteers (Mobilization Protocols):

- a) Each State is required to develop written protocols that govern the activation, operation, and timeframes of the ESAR-VHP system in response to local, State, and National emergencies. HRSA may ask for copies of these protocols as a means of documenting compliance. HRSA will include protocol models in future versions of the *ESAR-VHP Guidelines*.

b) Each State ESAR-VHP program is required to establish a working relationship with its State Emergency Management agency and develop protocols outlining the required actions to be taken to deploy volunteers during declared emergencies. These protocols must ensure 24 hour/7 days-a-week accessibility to the ESAR-VHP system. Major areas of focus include:

- 1) Intrastate deployment: States must develop protocols that coordinate the use of ESAR-VHP volunteers with those from other volunteer organizations, such as the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC).
- 2) Interstate deployment: States must develop protocols outlining the steps needed to respond to requests for volunteers received from another State. States that have provisions for making volunteers employees or agents of the State must also develop protocols for deployment of volunteers to other States through the State Emergency Management agency via the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).

Each State must have a process for receiving and maintaining the security of volunteers' personal information sent to them from another State and procedures for destroying the information when it is no longer needed.

- 3) Federal deployment: Each State must develop protocols necessary to respond to requests for volunteers that are received from the Federal Government. Further, each State must adhere to the protocol developed by the Federal Government that governs the process for receiving requests for volunteers, identifying willing and available volunteers, and providing each volunteer's credentials to the Federal Government.

Timeframes for Compliance:

Category A States must meet these requirements by August 2007 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2007.

Category B States must meet these requirements by August 2008 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2008.

III. ESAR-VHP Evaluation and Reporting Requirements

12. Each State must develop a plan for regular testing of its ESAR-VHP system through drills and exercises.

Each State is required to begin testing the activation and operation of the ESAR-VHP system in preparation for response in local, State, and National emergencies.

Timeframes for Compliance:

Category A States must meet these requirements by August 2007 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2007.

Category B States must meet these requirements by August 2008 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2008.

Note: HRSA will review this requirement regularly for possible adjustments based on the experience of the States.

13. Each State must develop a plan for reporting system performance and capabilities.

Each State will be required to report system performance and capabilities data as specified in NBHPP guidance and/or *ESAR-VHP Guidelines*. States will be asked to report numbers of enrolled volunteers by profession as well as the addition of system capabilities as they are implemented and system activity during responses to actual events.

Timeframe for Compliance:

All States must meet these requirements by August 2007 and report on compliance in the End-of-Year Progress Report due December 2007.

14. Each State must provide status reports on its progress in meeting these compliance requirements.

Timeframe for Compliance:

Each State will begin reporting progress toward meeting the compliance requirements in an addendum to the FY 2005 NBHPP final report due December 2006.