



## **“AFTER SUPERSTORM SANDY: LESSONS LEARNED FOR BOLSTERING THE RESILIENCE OF HEALTH SYSTEMS & SERVICES”**

*A Symposium in New York City on December 3, 2013 co-organized by*

**The Kostas Research Institute for Homeland Security, Northeastern University &  
Columbia University’s National Center for Disaster Preparedness at the Earth Institute**

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### **SYMPOSIUM GOALS**

(1) To assess the capacity of the health systems and services in the metro-New York/New Jersey region to withstand, nimbly recover, and adapt to significant hazards; and (2) to draw on Superstorm Sandy as a "teachable moment" for informing and advancing concrete action that ensure greater resilience of health systems and services nationally.

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### **OBJECTIVES**

The project will bring together health systems and public health leaders, emergency managers and other governmental stakeholders, and experts from major coastal cities to meet with their metro-NY/NJ counterparts: (1) to identify lessons to be learned from the Sandy experience that can lead to the development of new tools, processes, and incentives for bolstering health system and service resilience regionally and nationally; and (2) to inform and forward a national agenda for managing the growing risk of extreme weather and other disasters, to include enhanced organizational and operational practices as well as strengthening health-related infrastructure.

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### **SYMPOSIUM QUESTIONS**

#### **Services:**

- From the perspective of health services sectors (e.g., hospital, ambulatory, nursing, specialized outpatient, addiction services) how well-prepared was the metro-NY/NJ region to mitigate effects of Sandy, respond and adapt to rapidly changing conditions, and recover to normal operations?
- Were the institutional and voluntary health services workforces adequately prepared and did they receive adequate support to respond to the demands of the storm?
- What demands ended up creating the greatest strain on the health services sectors (e.g., unplanned evacuations; unanticipated patient surges; need to coordinate provision of resources; need to track patients, medications, supplies, clinical services delivered; need for additional or more specifically-trained workforce, etc.)
- What medical and public health challenges emerged after Sandy, and how were these similar or different from previous disasters?
- What unique challenges for children, the frail and elderly, institutionalized populations, and people with chronic illness were highlighted by the experience of coping with Sandy?

### Systems:

- To what extent were health services effectively integrated and coordinated locally and regionally – on a planned or ad hoc basis – in the context of Sandy?
- What or who influenced health system preparation, response, and recovery in the context of Sandy? What new actors, institutions, or organizations emerged or became critical players?
- How can interdependencies in the health system be better identified and understood in advance?

### Policies:

- What near-term actions can be taken to strengthen health system resilience by public and private organizations and the general public?
- What special attention should be given to protect the lives and well-being of people with complex needs in a time of crisis like Sandy?
- How can regional communication and coordination be improved amongst elements of the health system infrastructure across the metro-NY/NJ region?
- What new initiatives, tools, processes, and incentives for bolstering health-related infrastructure resilience locally, regionally and nationally should be considered for near-term adoption?

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## FORUM LOCATION

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Lerner Hall, 2920 Broadway, Room 555, New York, NY 10027

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## EMERGENCY & ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACT INFORMATION

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## ABOUT THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

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The National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University's Earth Institute is an academic research center. NCDP senior faculty have appointments in the school's departments of Health Policy and Management and Sociomedical Sciences at the Mailman School of Public Health and its twenty affiliated faculty represent a broad range of academic expertise in disciplines across the University's schools of public health, medicine, nursing, engineering, and the Earth Institute.

NCDP carries out research that helps us prepare for, respond to, and recover from large-scale disasters – including hurricanes, earthquakes, nuclear accidents, pandemic flu, and terrorist attacks. NCDP's approach combines research, policy work, education, and high level advocacy to ensure that the best thinking – and best practices – become part of our national disaster preparedness and recovery work.