

Are You Ready for the Next Disaster?

Hurricanes, pandemics. Disasters come in all shapes and sizes.

To prepare, the Texas Legislature declared May 1 “Medical Records Checkup Day.” To prepare, take advantage of these tips from fellow Texas physicians.

- ☐ **Prepare Clinical Summaries** – Encourage your patients to use your electronic health record’s patient portal before a disaster strikes to review, download, save, and print a clinical summary. This summary is vital when patients cannot reach their regular physician or pharmacist. It ideally should include allergies, medications, immunizations, recent hospitalizations, key lab results, special medical equipment needs, and physician contact information.
- ☐ **Back Up Records** – Do this regularly on a cloud-based system. That includes not only patients’ medical records, but also things like contracts, compliance plans, and financial records. Test your backups regularly to make sure you have done them correctly.
- ☐ **Move Your Computer** – If you’re expecting a storm or physical threat to your office, move your computer and other electronic hardware out of danger. If pressed for time, place the computer on higher ground within the office to reduce the chance flood waters will destroy it.
- ☐ **Do Remote Computer Testing** – Test your ability to access your computer information remotely before disaster strikes.
- ☐ **Change-of-Address Notices** – Notify health plans, Medicare, and Medicaid if you need to stop mail because your practice is out of commission, or if you’re moving the practice to a new location.
- ☐ **Have a Way to Communicate with Your Staff and Patients** – You’ll need to reach people quickly during and after the event.
- ☐ **Find a Backup Power Source** – That will be important in case the electricity does not return immediately.
- ☐ **Update the Website** – Assign one person in the office to update the practice’s website.
- ☐ **Consider Flood Insurance** – The National Flood Insurance Program provides up to \$250,000 coverage on a building and up to \$100,000 on contents. Supplemental flood insurance is available from private insurers.