LESSONS LEARNED FROM HURRICANES IRMA AND MARIA

Continuity of Prescription Benefits Programs During Natural Disasters

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THE PROGRAM

The frequency and severity of natural disasters appears to be increasing. During 2017 alone, the U.S. experienced 16 separate billion-dollar disaster events.

Headquartered in Puerto Rico, in the heart of so-called Hurricane Alley, Abarca has a unique perspective on the effect disasters have on the availability of prescription drugs, medication adherence, and community health.

Hurricane Maria, in particular, devastated many of the communities we serve. Since the storm, we have conducted a deep analysis of the impact of these types of events, and the best way to prepare for the next one.

We believe that we have an obligation to our community, the pharmacies we partner with, and our peers in the industry to share our learnings. Today, our approach to disaster planning, response, and recovery begins with five components:

- 1. Preparing the infrastructure. We developed a highly redundant infrastructure, with data and call center operations routed through at least three different facilities across the US. All of the data centers have redundant connections to the main pharmacy switches. Data is continuously replicated across backup data centers. Virtual call centers allow calls to be handled from any location with internet connectivity, and we have key personnel located across several time zones who are cross-trained to assist members, pharmacies, and providers in a variety of ways.
- **2. Getting the team in place.** Being ready for natural disasters begins by cultivating a culture of awareness and preparedness. We have a cross-functional business continuity team that trains the staff and conducts drills throughout the year. Each member has reviewed what

occurred during, and how we responded to, Hurricane Maria and understands his or her responsibilities in the face of the next storm. The composition of the team is reviewed regularly to account for changes in personnel and positions.

Our plan includes a timeline of activities that must take place 72, 48, and 24 hours before a storm's anticipated landfall, and immediate actions after it hits. Although this schedule was developed with a hurricane in mind, it can be adapted for other disasters, including tornadoes, earthquakes, and forest fires that allow less time to prepare.

A sophisticated internal communications program is also in place that allows us to check on the wellbeing of our team members and their families, and to alert them to organizational activities.

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3. Ensuring availability of medications. In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Maria, we assisted pharmacies in serving members by processing claims over the phone and visiting more than 200 retail locations. By deploying clinical and operations teams across the island and into the community, we were able to develop a database of which pharmacies had inventory and were able to serve customers. We continuously updated this information and made it available to physicians, and members.

A SMARTER PLATFORM A BETTER EXPERIENCE A HIGHER STANDARD

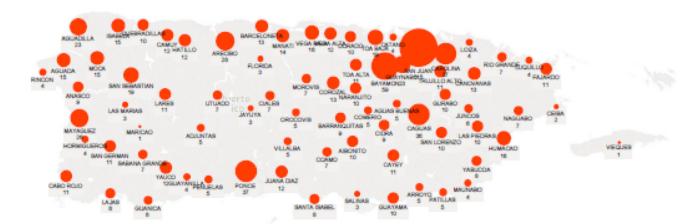


FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF PHARMACIES PROCESSING BY MUNICIPALITY

By contacting pharmacies, either by phone or in person, we were able to identify for physicians, government programs, and members where prescriptions could be filled.

4. Maintaining medication therapy management (MTM) programs. MTM is a service aimed at improving medication related outcomes through patient education and pharmacists-led interventions. These programs are particularly important to maintaining the health of people with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, and cancer.

After natural disasters, clinical teams are often unable to reach members by phone to conduct comprehensive medical reviews or track adherence. To overcome this, our MTM team of case managers and clinicians visited prescribers in person. Our analytics team prioritized which providers should be seen based on geography and the patients they served. We then

worked with the prescribers and pharmacies to identify patients in greatest need of immediate intervention and contacted them using any available method to provide counsel and assist them in obtaining the medications they needed.

5. Ongoing planning and learning. Building an organization and infrastructure that is ready for the devastation of hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and other potentially devastating events requires constant review, analysis, and practice. New resources become available, best practices from other industries emerge, and each company's risks change over time. At Abarca, we are continuously reevaluating our business continuity and disaster recovery programs in search of a better way.

ACHIEVED OUTCOMES

In the aftermath of Maria, Abarca experienced zero downtime in our ability to process claims and respond to calls from members, pharmacies, or physicians.

By sending clinicians and operations experts into the field, we created a database of pharmacies where patients could have prescriptions filled that served as an official resource for the Puerto Rican government. Given the extent of the devastation and the length of time required for many pharmacies to resume normal operations, this directory was essential to keeping members with chronic conditions adherent.

By adapting our MTM program, our principal health plan client on the island was able to maintain a CMS 5-star rating, in spite of the storm.

LESSONS LEARNED

Natural disasters can have a devastating impact on community health, particularly among the most vulnerable populations.

However, with redundant infrastructure and proper planning and training, pharmacy benefit managers can go beyond their traditional role of managing prescription claims to support providers, pharmacies and government agencies and lessen the impact on communities.

Zero downtime of Abarca systems

Official Resource for the Puerto Rican government ****

CMS 5-star rating for a principal client