Regional Communication with Local and State Emergency Preparedness Officials on the VHASS Platform

**Purpose:**

This document describes the process and framework utilized to communicate facility concerns with local, state, federal and tribal emergency management officials as necessary and appropriate before, during and after disaster incidents.

**Scope:**

This document describes communication with the following agencies:

1. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH)
2. XXXXXXXX County/City Emergency Management
3. The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)
4. The Central Virginia Healthcare Coalition (CVHC) – Regional Healthcare Coordination Center (RHCC)

Additionally, the procedures outlined in this document facilitate communication between among the various healthcare facilities in the region.

**Background:**

Traditionally, communication is among the most universally noted challenges in disaster incident response after-action reports for healthcare agencies. The nature of the healthcare industry can require great focus on the daily business at hand. This intense focus can lead to a tunnel vision that limits the facility’s capability and awareness regarding communicating needs and statuses with critical emergency management partners outside the organization.

This document outlines the procedures to access and utilized a commonly used, pre-identified, standard information-sharing platform that is accessible and monitored by the agencies under the scope of this document.

**Plan:**

Whenever necessary and appropriate, this facility will utilize the VHASS platform to receive information from, and share information with regional agencies and other healthcare facilities. Instances where this plan may be utilized include severe weather events, mass gathering events, unannounced disaster incidents, mass casualty incidents, healthcare facility evacuation incidents, drills, and exercises in preparation for the aforementioned hazards. Additionally, the VHASS platform can be activated for other events, at this facility’s request, by contacting CVHC at its 24-hour response line: 1-800-276-0683.

**Access and Registration:**

Access to the VHASS platform is by approval only. Registration begins by browsing to [www.vhha-mci.org](http://www.vhha-mci.org). Registration must occur prior to platform need as it is not an instant process. Proper registration includes acquiring a registered account for the facility and for the individual user as well as the successful verification of an alerting phone number

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**Alerting:**

CVHC-RHCC sends alerts via the VHASS Platform notifying facilities of the need to access the platform and respond to requests/view important information.

**Accessing/Sharing Information via the Event Module:**

The Event Module is the primary section of VHASS utilized to share information during a disaster. The facility will access the event module as requested by CVHC and respond to requests for information as appropriate.

Full explanation of the VHASS Website and tutorials are hosted at http://info.vhha-mci.org/

**Additional training on these procedures is available from CVHC staff. They can be contacted at rhcc@central-region.org.**