



NEMA Support in Action: COVID-19 Response – Part II

NEMA's members continue to play a critical role in the response to COVID-19 eleven months into one of the most complex events in the history of the United States. It's taken heroic efforts from government, the private sector, and non-profit organizations to get us to this point as the virus continues to surge to critical levels in many states and hospital ICUs are at capacity. There is hope however as COVID-19 vaccinations are underway in every state, but we understand it may not be until fall 2021 before life returns to normal.

In the meantime, NEMA also continues to do our part to support our members through this challenging time. Our team of knowledgeable and experienced staff remain focused on providing you with timely information and resources along with influential representation on the national level to ensure emergency management's voice is heard.

Here's a snapshot of NEMA's activities through spring/summer and fall/winter 2020.

STATE MEMBER SUPPORT

- Developed and distributed **State EM COVID-19 Recovery Planning Recommendations**.
- Surveyed states and **provided information on:**
 - **the Role of EM in State Vaccination Strategies**
 - **State PPE Stockpiles**
 - **State Provision of PPE for Schools**
- **Advocated for the states to FEMA** on the need for 100 percent cost-share on COVID declarations, approving HMGP requests, and working through miscommunications and regional disparities in FEMA COVID-19 Public Assistance Guidance.
- Participated as a **member** of the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) work group on COVID-19 vaccine** and shared information with the states.
- Participated as a **member** and provided state input to the **Defense Production Act 708 Committee for the Distribution of Medical Resources Necessary to Respond to a Pandemic**.
- **Coordinated state input to the Government Accounting Office (GAO) reports** on state experiences with the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS), equity in emergency management programs, equipment acquisitions, and the utilization of Public Assistance in the response to COVID.
- Conducted **first-ever joint meeting between NEMA Legislative and IAEM Governmental Affairs Committees with Congressional Committee staff** to discuss current issues and priorities before Congress.
- **Shared state best practices in a COVID environment** including Ohio's virtual exercises, Iowa's shift to statewide teleworking, and Illinois leveraging virtual systems to engage stakeholders and update plans.
- Connected CDC experts with the NEMA Public Information Officer (PIO) Subcommittee to provide **early access to the Vaccination with Confidence Campaign and resources**.
- Hosted weekly and then bi-weekly **information sharing calls with the Private Sector Leads Group** on the COVID response.
- Supported the Public Assistance/Individual Assistance Officers Subcommittee efforts to gather **data from the states/regions on COVID-19 testing and PPE eligibility decisions by FEMA regions and backlogs on processing project worksheets and decision-making at the Consolidated Resource Centers (CRCs)**. Presented the data to **FEMA senior officials who are currently working to address the issues**.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER SUPPORT

- Ongoing **engagement with President-Elect Biden DHS/FEMA and HHS transition teams to convey state EM priorities**. Developed **NEMA Recommendations for FEMA’s First 200 Days** and shared with the transition team and all members.
- Hosted a **four-day virtual summit “Standing Together – Even While We’re Apart”** to bring together NEMA membership to discuss vital issues. Access to the virtual summit was **free** for all NEMA members. Sessions held included:
 - A policy discussion between NEMA President Sima Merick and FEMA Administrator Pete Gaynor;
 - A panel on what we’ve learned about the national emergency management system during a pandemic response;
 - A session on the design, implementation, and legal challenges to executive orders in a COVID environment;
 - A discussion on the supply chain, public messaging, and what states need to know about a coming COVID-19 vaccine;
 - Managing the Coronavirus in a hot zone such as New York City, and;
 - Ensuring positive outcomes for underserved populations in disasters and public health emergencies.
- Hosted **free webinars for members** focused on:
 - Pandemics and Planning for the Next Big Thing Using Modeling and Technology
 - COVID Detection in Waste-Water Streams
 - Vaccine Supply Chain
- Weekly dissemination of NEMA-Pacific Disaster Center **State Emergency Measures for COVID-19 tracker**. Beyond NEMA, the weekly tracker was shared with partner associations, key federal agencies, and the White House Intergovernmental Affairs Office. This tracker is also used by federal, state, and local stakeholders.
- Weekly **information sharing** on federal advisories and guidance documents

EMAC

- Served as virtual EMAC liaison to the **FEMA National Response Coordination Center** from mid-March through August.
- Supported the **sharing of PPE and ventilators** between states through EMAC.
- Developed and shared an **EMAC Guidance Document and template Governor Executive Order on the use of EMAC for telehealth** – in partnership with the American Telemedicine Association and National Council of State Boards of Nursing.
- Serving as EMAC liaison to **National Guard Bureau** and **USNORTHCOM**.
- Supported states through other events such as **wildfires, hurricanes and civil unrest**. **In just 2020, states have deployed over 3600 personnel**, providing critical support to states during their time of need all while taking COVID-19 precautions for a safe deployment.
- Providing **on-demand training and technical support** for the EMAC Operations System in support of state EMAs requesting or providing resources for COVID-19 response.
- Rolled out **7 updated online EMAC training modules** for state personnel.

CONGRESSIONAL PARTNERSHIP

- Coordinated **coalition** of nine other associations representing state and local stakeholders in supporting H.R. 8266, the *FEMA Assistance Relief Act of 2020* which **adjusts the cost share for COVID-related declarations to 100 percent and clarifies eligible FEMA assistance**.

- **Testified** before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee on the Role of the Strategic National Stockpile in Pandemic Response.
- Regular **data and information sharing** on EM response activities and answering Congressional inquiries.
- Sustaining open **dialogue with all Congressional authorizing and appropriations committees** to address EM issues through legislation.
- Reconciling misinformation and clarifying policy and programmatic needs of the states to key Congressional committees.
- Sustained \$5 million increase for EMPG and \$2 million directed spending for EMAC in the FY21 DHS appropriation.

WHITE HOUSE AND PARTNER ASSOCIATIONS COOPERATION

- Participating in **weekly or bi-weekly calls** between:
 - The White House and State and Local leadership;
 - The White House and leadership of key associations;
 - The “Big 7” state and local organizations with DHS Intergovernmental Affairs; and
 - The CDC State Task Force;
 - National Business Emergency Operations Center (NBEOC);
 - DHS/CISA/NBEOC
- Ongoing information sharing and coordination with **National Homeland Security Consortium (NHSC), EMAC Advisory Group, and NEMA-ASTHO-GHSAC Joint Policy Work Group**. Held state information sharing sessions on the COVID-19 response and vaccine strategies with the NEMA-ASTHO-GHSAC group, including securing an address by Dr. Nancy Messonnier, Director, CDC National for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases.
- Providing EM related information to **The Council of State Governments (CSG)** to share with state executive, legislative and judicial branch leaders.
- **Leading COVID-19 After-Action Review with the National Homeland Security Consortium**. The report is due spring 2021.
- Collaborated with IAEM, CHDS, and others in presenting timely **webinars** open to NEMA members on topics such as:
 - Resilience in the face of COVID; a two-part webinar series on resilience in the face of COVID focusing on lessons and observations from the frontline from resilience professionals and personal, organizational, and community resilience.
 - Policy and legal issues during a pandemic; a panel of attorneys representing public health departments and the private healthcare industry reflecting on the challenges that have confronted policymakers, public health and emergency management leaders during the COVID-19 response.