



Association of Academic Health Centers  
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**For Immediate Release**  
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# News Release

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## **Academic Health Center Leaders Learn Self-Reliance in Disasters; Call for Reduced Federal Bureaucracy**

### ***Association of Academic Health Centers Releases Brief Guide for Emergency Preparedness and Response***

Academic health center leaders highlight self-reliance, anticipating needs, action plans, and the need for reduced federal bureaucracy in a *Brief Guide for Academic Health Center Disaster Preparedness and Response* for academic health centers and other interested institutions and policymakers, released today by the Association of Academic Health Centers (AAHC). With the most significant responsibilities in patient care, health professions education, and biomedical research in many communities throughout the country, academic health centers are keystones of the nation's health and economic infrastructure.

The guide, to be expanded and updated by the AAHC, provides advice and lessons learned from recent disasters for academic health center leaders and other interested administrators and policymakers. Major academic health center leaders share their insights and concerns based on first-hand experiences with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita as well as major involvement in local, regional and national disaster planning operations for terrorism and biodefense.

Leaders of Louisiana's academic health centers say that such institutions cannot take help for granted, emphasizing what was perhaps the most unfortunate and troubling lesson learned this past year. Thus, effective planning, which anticipates inefficiency or inability to address an emergency on the part of government, is deemed essential to response. Leadership, communications, workforce, and education are also addressed in the brief.

The guide concludes with an AAHC action plan with top priorities that include educating policymakers about ways to improve current systems and prevent gaps and failings in a time of public need.

AAHC President Steven A. Wartman, MD, PhD, says, "It is essential that the nation's academic health centers have well-conceived emergency preparedness plans, both individually and collectively. The lessons learned thus far place a premium on self-sufficiency, decisive decision making, and prioritization."

The Association of Academic Health Centers is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the nation's health care system by mobilizing and enhancing the strengths and resources of the academic health center enterprise in health professions education, patient care, and research.

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