



# Annual **REPORT**

2023

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Arizona Coalition for Healthcare Emergency Response (AzCHER) FY 2023 annual report summarizes activities from 7/01/22 to 6/30/23 related to its mission to unify Arizona's healthcare and public health systems for the continual development and improvement of relationships, plans, and actions that meet the needs of the Whole Community before, during, and after emergencies.

## **FY23 highlights:**

**GOAL MET:** Representation and engagement from each core member type (hospital/healthcare, public health, emergency management, and EMS), as dictated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP).

**SITUATIONAL AWARENESS:** Responded to November 2022 pediatric patient surge by hosting public health, hospitals, emergency management, and EMS professionals bi-weekly to discuss strategies and share resources.

## **COMMUNITY HAZARD VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT AND RESOURCE GAP ANALYSIS:**

198 member organizations were surveyed representing:

- 11 public health agencies
- 42 hospitals
- 4 state organizations
- 8 emergency management organizations
- 127 healthcare facilities
- 6 emergency medical service agencies

62 members took part in regional work groups to deliver a statewide and regional hazard assessment.

## **UPDATED KEY PLANS:**

- Integrated Preparedness Plan
- Emergency Response Plan
- Radiation Surge Annex

**3RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE** focused on Safety, Security, and Situational Awareness with emphasis on active threat events with over 120 attendees

**EXPANDED MEMBERSHIP to 905 facility/site members**, engaging with a broader range of healthcare providers, community organizations, and government agencies.





*Robin Oothoudt*

## **NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

### **AZCHER'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

Moving forward, we will actively seek opportunities to diversify funding sources, forge partnerships, and explore grant opportunities to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Coalition. We aim to expand our network by engaging more healthcare organizations, community leaders, and emergency response agencies. Building robust relationships will enhance our collective ability to respond effectively to emergencies. We will continue to invest in education and training programs to enhance the preparedness and response capabilities of our members. This includes conducting regular exercises, workshops, and sharing best practices to improve overall readiness. Lastly, we will explore innovative technologies and information systems to streamline communication, data sharing, and resource sharing processes, thereby improving overall response efficiency.

- Robin Oothoudt, AzCHER Executive Director



## THIRD ANNUAL AzCHER Conference

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*Safety, Security, and Situational Awareness in the context of active shooter events and workplace violence*

In today's world, the unfortunate reality is that such incidents can occur anywhere, posing a significant threat to the safety and well-being of individuals and healthcare communities. It is imperative that we all take proactive measures to protect ourselves and those around us.

### Conference insights:

**Safety:** Donald MacDuffie and Jeff Frazey with Banner Health emphasized the safety of individuals should always be the highest priority during an active shooter event. Preparedness and preventive actions can make a significant difference in minimizing the impact of such incidents. Establish and promote a culture of safety within organizations, schools, public spaces, and communities as a whole.

**Security:** Law enforcement partners in Maricopa County outlined comprehensive security measures instrumental in deterring and mitigating active shooter situations. This includes implementing robust access control systems, conducting regular security assessments, and maintaining a visible and vigilant security presence. Trained security personnel and technology such as surveillance cameras and intrusion detection systems can further enhance security measures.

**Situational Awareness:** A panel of healthcare emergency managers reviewed active shooter near-miss events and discussed how situational awareness is crucial in recognizing potential threats and taking appropriate actions. Individuals must be attentive to their surroundings, remain alert to any suspicious behavior, and report any concerns promptly to the relevant authorities. Encouraging and providing training can empower individuals to identify and respond effectively to warning signs or indicators of a potential active shooter event.



# THIRD ANNUAL AzCHER Conference

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## Conference insights continued:

**Inclusive Collaboration and Communication:** Virginia Hartley, with the Office of Access and Functional Needs of the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services shared their first-of-its-kind active shooter awareness guidance. By establishing strong partnerships and open lines of communication with local law enforcement, healthcare workplace management can expedite emergency response efforts and ensure a coordinated and cohesive approach to creating an inclusive response environment for individuals with a disability or an access or functional need.

➤ AzCHER will continue supporting preparedness and training for active threats at healthcare facilities. Preparedness is key to effectively responding to an active shooter situation. Organizations, educational institutions, and public entities should develop and regularly update comprehensive emergency response plans. Conducting active shooter drills and training exercises can help familiarize individuals with the appropriate actions to take, such as lockdown procedures, evacuation routes, and communication protocols.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- ✓ take proactive measures
- ✓ enhance security measures
- ✓ promote situational awareness
- ✓ foster a culture of preparedness

*It is our collective responsibility to protect ourselves, our colleagues, and our communities, ensuring a safe and secure environment for all.*

## SUPPORTING A Large Scale Event

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In October 2021, AzCHER was asked to participate in the Public Health/Medical Resource Working Group (RWG), led by the Maricopa County Department of Public Health. The RWG was convened in preparation for a large-scale sporting event hosted annually by the National Football League that could have potential impacts to the healthcare delivery system in the greater Phoenix area. Some of AzCHER's responsibilities included patient tracking system exploration, alerts within the healthcare community, drafting a communications plan, and contact list development. Some notable highlights from AzCHER's perspective include:

- 2/09/2023, 2201 hours - Requested to send HAN on behalf of Phoenix Fire Department to Central Region hospitals requesting they update EMResource - need for current Facility Diversion Status due to a critical hospital on divert.
- 2/09/2023, 2200 hours - Phoenix Fire Department needed information on burn bed capacity and resources in the State. AzCHER Multi-Agency Coordination Center (MACC) representative was able to quickly provide that information through the Coalition's Burn Surge Annex.
- 2/11/2023, 1809 hours - Requested to send HAN to Central Region hospitals asking for an update to EMResource for better situational awareness for EMS/Fire during events.
- 2/12/2023, 1244 hours - Requested to send HAN to Central Region hospitals for an additional update to EMResource in preparation for large-scale event.
- Ability to meet key emergency response stakeholders face to face and further define AzCHER's role.

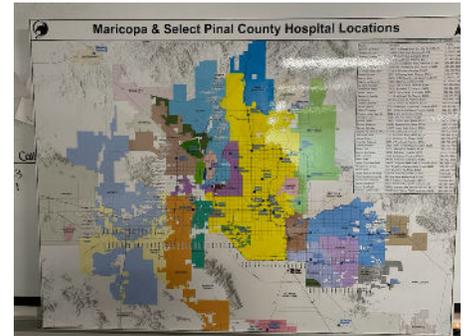


Photo by Traci Templeton. AzCHER member, Valleywise Health, volunteered time and resources by developing comprehensive maps for hospital locations in Maricopa and Pinal counties.



Photo by Jamie Beauvais. AzCHER Multi-Agency Coordination Center, Brianna Rooney Scheetz, works alongside Emergency Support Function 8 lead, Maricopa County Department of Public Health.

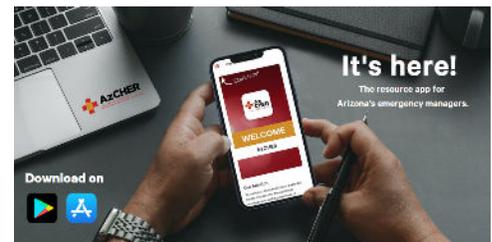
## Multipurpose Emergency Response Application

### > Revolutionizing Access to Response Tools and Communication

AzCHER used Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) funding to develop a multi-purpose emergency response application (app), that functions as an emergency response notification system and houses virtual training manuals, resource guides, incident command forms, and federal emergency response resources.

The **first of its kind**, AzCHER's app centralizes many emergency response resources such as:

- Hospital Evacuation Decision
- Incident Command System and Mass Casualty Guides
- Psychological first aid training
- and more!



The app significantly bolsters communication and situational awareness for the over 900 users working in hospitals, long term care facilities, and emergency medical services across Arizona, many of whom are members of Arizona's Health Care Coalition.

The AzCHER mobile app can send out a mass notification, in the event of an emergency, by using geographic information system mapping. This feature allows AzCHER to increase its emergency communication and coordination when planning for and responding to a disaster.

When Arizona hosted the 2023 Super Bowl, AzCHER worked with the National Football League's Super Bowl planning team and a nearby Level I trauma center to conduct an emergency communications exercise using the app's built-in emergency notification feature. The exercise simulated an emergency response to a mass casualty incident and the app was used to notify the emergency management team and the hospital emergency response team in the radius of the trauma center. This successful exercise emphasized the value of the app and its ability to provide near instant communications during an emergency.

### >>> WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING

Healthcare coalitions in Connecticut, Colorado, Hawaii, and Vermont are working with AzCHER to develop similar apps, which will enable them to equip their communities with new technology and resources to save lives during an incident or disaster.

## RESPONDING TO

# Member Resource Needs

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Though not currently in active response, AzCHER continues to assist members through its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for resource sharing. In times of crisis, the generosity and willingness of our members to share resources, whether it be medical supplies, personnel, or facilities, have been invaluable. Member support has helped bridge critical gaps and ensured that we can effectively meet the needs of those affected by healthcare emergencies.

### Northern Region:

Dec. 12, 2022

12:57 p.m. >>>

White Mountain Regional Medical Center (WMRMC) contacts AzCHER to request additional Abbott ID NOW PCR machines to meet the demand for the high number of COVID-19, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and influenza tests. AzCHER Logistics contacts the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) Health Emergency Operations Center.

Dec. 15, 2022

10:25 a.m. >>>

The Arizona State Public Health Laboratory ships its Abbott ID NOW PCR machine. This exchange of equipment was a huge success as it enabled a rural hospital to run an abundance of tests within a reasonable time period.

### Southern Region:

In the summer of 2020, the Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association purchased 660 portable ventilators to help manage a COVID-19 patient surge in AzCHER member hospitals. AzCHER distributed the ventilators to local public health who then passed them on to hospitals as requested using an allocation formula developed by ADHS.

As the pandemic is now endemic, the need for ventilators in hospitals has greatly lessened and some local public health departments have leftover supply. AzCHER saw an opportunity and asked them to store and distribute to those smaller agencies for emergencies and in alignment with the capabilities and objectives of the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) grant guidance.

# RESPONDING TO Member Resource Needs

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## Southern Region (continued)

The Public Safety and Tribal Nations Liaison of the Pima County Health Department (PCHD) put some of those ventilators into the hands of smaller and rural EMS agencies and fire departments, where expensive equipment, like ventilators, is normally beyond the reach of such agencies. Thanks to the hard work of PCHD Division of Public Health Emergency Preparedness, several agencies are now using or evaluating the vents with their ambulance units.

2023 ventilator recipients:

- ✚ Ajo Ambulance
- ✚ American Medical Response
- ✚ Cochise County Fire/EMS
- ✚ Arizona Department of Public Safety Air Rescue
- ✚ Eastern Arizona College EMS
- ✚ Fort Thomas Volunteer Fire and Rescue
- ✚ Freeport McMaron Safford
- ✚ Fry Fire District
- ✚ Greenlee County
- ✚ Lifeline Ambulance
- ✚ Pima Volunteer Fire and Rescue
- ✚ San Carlos Apache EMS/Fire



*Manny Montano stands with Sierra Vista Fire and Medical Services. (L-R) S. Loucks, Manny Montano, Battalion Chief Matthew Irlmeier, D. Dotson, A. Saathoff*



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“The distribution to Cochise County agencies was gracefully coordinated by Battalion Chief Matthew Irlmeier of Sierra Vista Fire and Medical Services. He is on the Cochise County Fire Chief’s Council and has the necessary contacts and trust of the agencies there. He gathered all the required information and served as my one point of contact. For that I am grateful to him and for his help.”

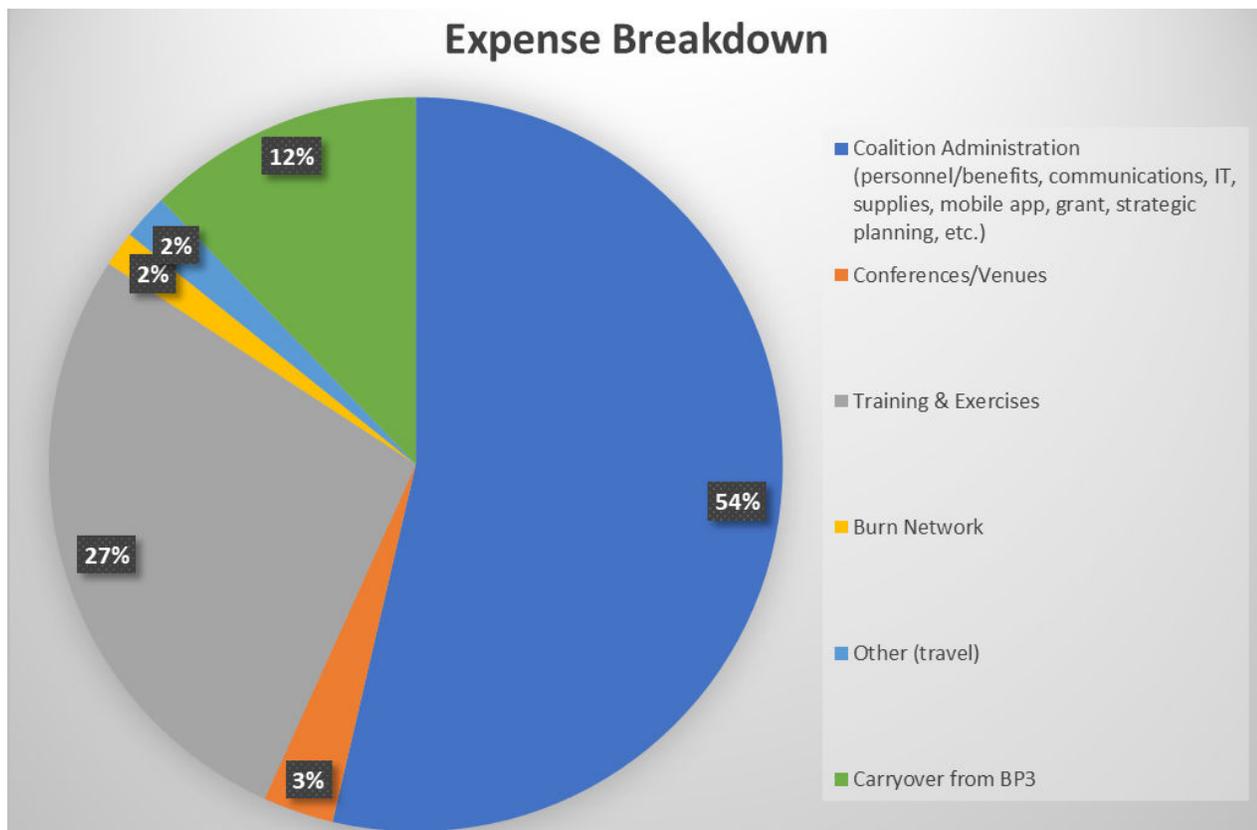
- **Manny Montano**, PCHD Public Safety and Tribal Nations Liaison



# Finance

AzCHER is funded through the HPP grant as a sub-awardee of ADHS. HPP funding is administered by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, ASPR.

Total BP4 (7/1/22 - 6/30/23) funding: \$1,180,000



In 2022-23, through an application process, AzCHER distributed HPP coalition funds to the following organizations for communications equipment, medical surge supplies, and emergency operations equipment: Oasis at Fellowship Square, St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center-Phoenix, Flagstaff Medical Center, Valleywise Health and Medical Center, Sonora Quest Laboratories, Chandler Regional Medical Center-Dignity Health, Fort Mojave Mesa Fire Department, the Gardens Rehab and Care Center, the Legacy Rehab and Care Center, Kingman Regional Medical Center, White Mountain Regional Medical Center, Summit Healthcare Regional Medical Center, multiple Haven Health facilities.

Funds were available and provided for:

- Communications equipment
- Medical surge supplies
- Preparedness supplies

## MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

# Crisis Standards of Care

AzCHER, in association with the Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association (AzHHA) presented a series of four workshops that addressed crisis standards of care in Arizona. The workshops were designed to provide training opportunities for participants to better understand the Arizona CSC Plan and to facilitate alignment of the AzCHER CSC Concept of Operations (CONOPS).

In support of CSC planning in Arizona, AzCHER will focus on aligning its response indicators and thresholds with the Arizona CSC Plan and assist hospitals in further defining their role. In future budget periods, AzCHER will provide a Best Practice Toolkit and continue to coordinate Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) training for healthcare staff, including line staff. AzCHER will work to provide other resources, such as best practice examples for patient transfer documentation and identification and for traumatic event staff support.

**Hospital Experiences from the Field**

Questions About This Topic	Best Practices/Challenges at Your Facility	Considerations for AzCHER/ AzCHER Role
<div style="background-color: #fff9c4; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">           How did you change your CSC plan/policies based on what you learned during COVID-19?         </div> <div style="background-color: #e0f7fa; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">           How do independent hospitals partner with other hospitals for resources and staff? Banner can share with Banner. Did Yuma have a partner hospital to share with?         </div> <div style="background-color: #fff9c4; padding: 5px;">           How has COVID impacted staffing in terms of employee resignations?         </div>	<div style="background-color: #f48fb1; padding: 10px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <b>Presenters: Joni Raneri &amp; Deborah Aders</b> </div> <div style="background-color: #e0f7fa; padding: 5px;">           Incredible talks. Thank you for sharing. "no one was prepared" -really feeling that!         </div>	<div style="background-color: #fff9c4; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; width: 50%;">           AzCHER has a vendor list for supplies, equipment, and staffing agencies.         </div> <div style="background-color: #fff9c4; padding: 5px; width: 50%;">           AzCHER can assist with exchange of supplies and equipment between hospitals and other healthcare facilities.         </div>

*Virtual sticky note board used to foster collaboration and discussion during the virtual workshops.*

# Acknowledgements

AzCHER would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation for your unwavering dedication, commitment, and collaboration as valued healthcare emergency preparedness partners. Your invaluable contributions and steadfast support have played a pivotal role in enhancing our collective response capabilities and ensuring the safety and well-being of our healthcare communities.

- Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association
- Arizona Department of Health Services
- Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs
- Arizona Health Care Association
- Coyote Crisis Collaborative
- Arizona Statewide Independent Living Council
- Arizona Department of Education
- AzCHER Regional Steering Committees
- County and Tribal Public Health
- County and Tribal Emergency Management
- Regional Emergency Medical Services Councils

## AzCHER staff contacts

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*L-R: Robin, Dawn, Shawna, Brianna and Jamie*