

## **Role of Telemedicine in Disaster Response** **COL Ron Poropatich, MD, FCCP**

### **Summary points:**

1. Established telemedicine programs operating in advance of a disaster insures greater likelihood of success for remote consultation during the response and recovery phase of a disaster.
2. Organization, training and planning remain a very critical element to successful telemedicine utilization during disasters.
3. Communications infrastructures are often among the first casualties of a disaster, and require identification of redundant back-up capabilities to insure continued operations.
4. Key telemedicine capabilities during a disaster include remote consultation, monitoring (to include physiologic clinical data and medical equipment), mentoring (ie ICU and surgical), and education/distance learning.
5. A portable, deployable telemedicine capability for on-site incident assessment back to emergency operations centers has been successfully utilized and proven invaluable for task organizing and calling forward for additional support items, and provides dedicated and secured communications.
6. There are numerous pulmonary/critical care and sleep medicine telemedicine applications that are evolving and over time will provide an established rich network that can be leveraged nationwide for disaster response.

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