



## Emergency Preparedness with Provider Bridge

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Several years ago, I came across a copy of a book by a Washington journalist that detailed some of the geology of the Pacific Northwest. More specifically, the focus was on the near-certainty of another megathrust earthquake and tsunami similar to the one that happened in 1700. For those of us not originally from this side of the country, the idea of being in an earthquake is sort of harrowing – I grew up regularly doing tornado drills in school, but an earthquake? It is an unknown. As I read the book, it was interesting to discover my house was less than a quarter mile from the Seattle Fault. At the time I lived in Seattle and regularly commuted to the Olympia-area. While the book is not exactly a direct exhortation to do personal disaster preparedness and planning, that was certainly one of the effects.

All of that experience came flooding back during a recent meeting with the Administrators In Medicine when the issue of disaster preparedness came up. A new service called [Provider Bridge](#) has been developed in partnership with the Federation of State Medical Boards that offers physicians and physician assistants an opportunity to assist in the event of emergencies and natural disasters. Leaving aside the scenario mentioned above, the incidence of emergencies and disasters has increased steadily in the U.S. since the 1980s. In 2023, the United States experienced 25 disasters, including a deadly wildfire in Maui and Hurricane Idalia in Florida.

Provider Bridge is a free-to-use technology platform that maintains a comprehensive registry of health professionals that can be accessed expeditiously to prepare for and respond to local, regional, or national emergencies or public health crises.

By registering for Provider Bridge, physicians and physician assistants join thousands of qualified medical providers who are ready to provide care and contribute to the effective emergency management of these disasters.

Joining the Provider Bridge platform allows you to create and own a time-stamped, digital report (“passport”) that includes your name, provider type, professional school and graduation date, NPI, state license number(s), specialty or area of practice, and DEA registration(s), as well as any disciplinary history. Each license is verified via data sharing with the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB), the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), and the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS).

Perhaps even more importantly, Provider Bridge also allows entities, including state medical and nursing boards, hospitals, health care institutions, public health offices, and emergency management entities to search for verified medical professionals who are willing to assist in an emergency or deploy to a disaster site or provide telehealth services. Additionally, entities can verify the credentials of state-based registrants as well as those professionals in other states.

Currently, Provider Bridge includes physicians, PAs, and nurses and is positioned to expand to include other medical professionals, such as mental health providers (psychologists, counselors, social workers), respiratory therapists, EMS providers, and others.

Provider Bridge supports expeditious emergency response most effectively by having a large number of medical professionals registered in the platform. [Registration is free](#) and takes only a few minutes.

Once registered for Provider Bridge, there are no additional steps you need to take. You can generate a certified pdf of your passport to present at an emergency site. Health care entities can add registrants to their provider list, pull Provider Bridge passports, and contact providers (unless a licensee chooses to opt out of allowing entities to find their profile). In the event of a national or state emergency, an entity can reach out to providers to determine if they are available and willing to provide health care services.

For more information, go to <https://www.providerbridge.org/>.