

## Ron Huffman

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**From:** Erelease@isdh.IN.gov  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 10, 2005 3:35 PM  
**To:** mhurst@isdh.in.gov  
**Subject:** Michael Hurst - Katrina relief update - 09/10/2005



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This is an update on Indiana's Hurricane Katrina response dated September 10.

Operation Hoosier Relief. On Saturday, September 3, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security deployed a multiple-agency task force comprised of more than 200 state, local, and private responders on an EMAC mission to provide hurricane relief in the state of Mississippi. This task force included a 26-member medical/public health team of physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, and respiratory therapists. The task force deployed to DeSoto County, Mississippi, for a 14-day tour. On Tuesday, September 6, the task force was relocated to Biloxi, Mississippi, where it is actively engaged in humanitarian, public safety, and medical/public health missions. Initial expectations for the medical/public health team to establish a field hospital have been modified in response to missions identified by Mississippi authorities through the Incident Commander for the Indiana task force. Under EMAC, our task force can only operate within Mississippi subject to the authority and specific mission requests from officials of that state. This is especially important for medical professionals because, in addition to liability protection, their professional license transfers to Mississippi under EMAC only if they are acting in response to specific requests. At this time, Mississippi has requested assistance from our medical team to provide medical support to a shelter in Biloxi. On September 10, we received additional mission assignments to support mental health crisis counselors in a clinic set up by that group, augmenting their services by providing medical assessments as needed. Our medical team was also asked to work with the Mississippi Department of Health to assist in surveying the population for medication needs and availability, and to make assessments on the impact of those issues to the incidence of chronic disease. Over the next week, as the Mississippi emergency management and health services infrastructure continues to improve, we expect to receive more requests, especially in the area of shelter support. We are currently using the needs assessments offered by our medical team in Biloxi to identify second, third, and fourth wave responders as relief teams. We are filling these relief teams using the many and varied responses to our solicitation for volunteers. The Operation Hoosier Relief deployments are for 14 days at a time. We expect to deploy the first relief group on or about September 17.

Evacuee Relief. In addition to Operation Hoosier Relief providing support to Mississippi in Mississippi, the state of Indiana is preparing to receive displaced residents of Mississippi and Louisiana. Some of these survivors, including entire family units, have already arrived and are residing in shelters set up by the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army. In addition to those survivors that have already arrived

through private and charitable channels, FEMA is arranging flights of survivors to states willing and able to shelter them. Indiana is scheduled to get its first flight of survivors through this formal process on Sunday, September 11. While the American Red Cross is completing an assessment of Indiana's ability to support these additional survivors within shelters that may be established throughout the state, at this time we expect to primarily utilize services within the Indianapolis metropolitan area. As shelters stand up or as survivors arrive in local communities, the survivors will be in need of health screenings and medical services. We will keep you alerted to this evolving issue and identify shelter locations and a point of contact once these are established should you be willing to volunteer your talents to assist victims of Hurricane Katrina right here in Indiana.

Thank you again for your response, and for your patience, as we continue to respond to and staff this national tragedy.