

# Frequently Asked Questions About *Illinois Helps*

## Why was *Illinois Helps* (ESAR-VHP) created?

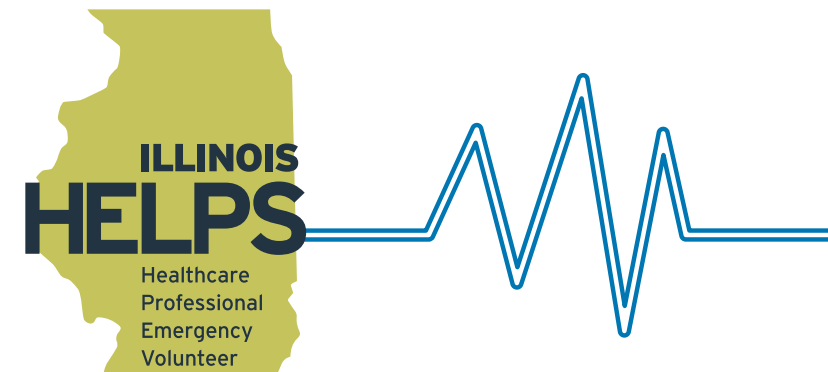
When disasters strike, hospitals close to the event often experience an influx of professional healthcare volunteers willing to help care for victims. History has shown that hospitals have difficulty effectively using volunteers due to an inability to verify identities and basic licensing or credentialing information, including training, skills, competencies and employment. The goal of *Illinois Helps* (ESAR-VHP) is to standardize the pre-registration system for emergency volunteer healthcare professionals so they can be easily mobilized.

## What are my obligations as an *Illinois Helps* volunteer? If I register, am I required to deploy if I am unable or unwilling to do so?

Once notified, volunteers can make a decision about availability. If volunteers agree to deploy, their information will be forwarded to the appropriate response organization. Pre-registration in the *Illinois Helps* database helps make the system robust and effectual in the event of a disaster or other emergent situation. Volunteers always retain the right to decline deployment for any reason.

## How will I be contacted in an emergency?

Once registered with the *Illinois Helps* database, volunteers will be asked the best way to be contacted during an emergency. Be sure to keep your information current and return to the *Illinois Helps* website to update your contact information if it changes.



## HOW DO I REGISTER?

You can register to volunteer at:

[WWW.ILLINOISHELPS.NET](http://WWW.ILLINOISHELPS.NET)

For more information about  
*Illinois Helps* visit [www.illinoishelps.net](http://www.illinoishelps.net)

**BE THE FIRST TO RESPOND  
TO A SIGNIFICANT DISASTER  
OR PUBLIC HEALTH  
EMERGENCY**

**“REGISTER TODAY ...  
VOLUNTEER TOMORROW”**

**WWW.ILLINOISHELPS.NET**

### What is *Illinois Helps*?

*Illinois Helps* is the Emergency System for the Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) for the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago. *Illinois Helps* is a secure, web based system used to register, verify and credential volunteer healthcare professionals BEFORE a major public health or medical emergency occurs.

### Who can register with *Illinois Helps*?

*Illinois Helps* is a database for ALL healthcare professionals. This includes individual/independent healthcare professionals; active, inactive or retired practitioners; and students enrolled in a health-related curriculum. There is also a great need for non-medical and administrative volunteers within the *Illinois Helps* system. The following healthcare professionals are encouraged to register with *Illinois Helps*:

- Nurses
- Physicians (M.D.s and D.O.s)
- Physician Assistants
- Respiratory Therapists
- Pharmacists
- Psychologists
- Clinical Social Workers
- Mental Health Counselors
- Paramedics/EMTs
- Radiology Technologists and Technicians
- Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians
- Diagnostic Medical Sonographers
- Dentists
- Veterinarians
- Non-medical/Administrative Volunteers
- And many more ...

## ILLINOIS HELPS...

**ESTABLISHES** a standardized, medical provider registry

**CONNECTS** healthcare professionals who wish to volunteer in the event of a disaster or public health emergency

**PRE-REGISTERS** healthcare professionals online

**VERIFIES** the credentials of qualified volunteers via a statewide secure database sponsored by the Illinois and Chicago Departments of Public Health

**ENSURES** that healthcare volunteers are matched with their professional competencies

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

Once you have registered to become a volunteer, your professional credentials will be verified and your information will become part of the statewide secure database.

In the event of an emergency, *Illinois Helps* may only be activated by the Director, Illinois Department of Public Health, or the Commissioner, Chicago Department of Public Health or their designees.

Upon activation, an alert message will be sent to *Illinois Helps* volunteers depending on the size, type, location, and specific needs of the incident — asking those available to respond and giving specific instructions on where to report and what is needed.

