

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PG. 1

Letter from the Chair

PG. 2

Calendar of Disaster Opportunities;
ACEP DM Survey

PG. 3

Editorial; Disaster Resources

PG. 4

Member Highlight: Dr. Marc Rosenthal

PG. 5

2023: Year in Disaster Photos

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Members of the ACEP Disaster Medicine Section,

Happy New Year and congratulations on another successful ACEP Scientific Assembly! It was great seeing so many of you in Philadelphia at the Disaster Section and the Disaster Preparedness and Response Committee meetings. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your support as I begin my two-year term as Chair of the Disaster Medicine Section, and more importantly, to recognize our new Immediate Past-Chair Dr. Eric Goralnick for his excellent, thoughtful leadership.

2024 is shaping up to be a very important year for our field. Disaster Medicine has entered its adolescent years as a subspecialty, and the pathway toward becoming a certified subspecialty recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties is now clear. With the support of the American Board of Emergency Medicine, it is my hope that we will see ABEM become the formal home for Disaster Medicine board certification in the coming years. The section leadership team will keep you apprised of further developments regarding our progress with ABEM and ABMS.

Any mention of board certification deserves a discussion about the requirements anticipated for a physician to become board-eligible, as this is a question I am frequently asked. While it is far too early in the process to predict the various potential pathways for eligibility, similar to the process our EMS colleagues developed, eventually fellowship training is likely to become a universal requirement. As a Disaster Medicine fellowship graduate and founder and director of a fellowship myself, I want to take this opportunity to encourage members of ACEP, and our section in particular, to explore the many fellowship training opportunities that currently exist and to encourage others to create novel Disaster Medicine fellowships. The ACEP Disaster Preparedness and Response Committee and the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine provide up-to-date resources about each fellowship program for those interested.

In 2023, a special task force of ACEP members was convened to perform a thorough evaluation of the ACEP Department of EMS and Disaster Preparedness, the organizational home for the sections and committees for Disaster Medicine, EMS, Air Medical Transport, Event Medicine, and Tactical and Law Enforcement Medicine. After nearly a year of work, volunteers wrote and submitted a very well-received report of our department's objectives, activities, successes, and future goals. I anticipate ongoing support from the College for our Disaster Medicine Section and Committee as we continue to serve as the primary organizations driving our subspecialty toward a successful future.

In 2024, look for important changes in the Section. We are continuing to formalize a mentorship program for those seeking professional guidance from seasoned experts. Section members have lobbied for changes at the annual scientific assembly to increase and improve available disaster medicine content for attendees, including opportunities to better showcase recent scientific research, and all signs indicate these efforts have been successful. The ACEP Disaster Medicine Section will strive to continue its mission to innovate, advocate, and educate all members of ACEP as we work to further the professional goals of our subspecialty.

Sincerely,



James P. Phillips, MD FACEP

**Chair, ACEP Disaster Medicine
Section**

**Associate Professor of Emergency
Medicine**

**Chief and Fellowship Director,
Disaster and Operational Medicine**

**The George Washington School of
Medicine and Health Sciences**

**Have thoughts about this newsletter? Want to contribute?
Email luh2103@caa.columbia.edu**

UPCOMING DISASTER OPPORTUNITIES

MULTIPLE DATES

- Center for Domestic Preparedness ([more info here](#))
- Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC) ([more info here](#))
- Medical Preparedness and Response to Bombing Incidents (MPRBI) ([more info here](#))
- TEEX Medical Management of CBRNE Events ([more info here](#))
- NOLA Wilderness Upgrade for Medical Professionals ([more details here](#))
- FEMA Emergency Management Institute (EMI) ([more details here](#))

FEBRUARY

- **February 7-8:** Medical Leadership in Disaster Preparedness and Response Virtual Conference: US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Strategic Preparedness and response (ASPR) Technical Resources, Assistance Center and Information Exchange (TRACIE) ([more details here](#))
- **February 8-9:** 8th International Conference on Climate Change, Colombo Sri Lanka ([more details here](#))
- **Date TBD:** ACEP Disaster Section: Cyber Disaster Panel Discussion: **Stay tuned for details.**
- **February 16-20:** High Risk Emergency Medicine; Honolulu Hawaii ([more details here](#))
- **February 26-March 1:** CONTOMS EMT-Tactical (EMT-T) BASIC ([more details here](#))
- **February 26-March 1:** Field Management of Chemical and Biological Casualties, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD ([more details here](#))

MARCH

- **March 5-8:** DMS Medical Team Specialist Course for FEMA US&R, Ocala, FL ([more details here](#))
- **March 19-21:** REAC?TS Health Physics in Radiation Emergencies, Oakridge TN ([more details here](#))
- **March 24-29:** Medical Management of Chemical and Biological Casualties Course (MCBC) - Fort Detrick ([more details here](#))
- **March 25-29:** ANR Austere Emergency Care, Gunnison CO ([more details here](#))
- **March 25-28:** 2024 Preparedness Summit, Cleveland, Ohio ([more details here](#))

Give Us Your Feedback!

Our goal is to align the ACEP Disaster Medicine Section with the educational and professional goals of our members. Please take this 5 minute survey to provide us with your valuable feedback.

[SURVEY LINK HERE](#)

APRIL

- **April 9-11:** REAC/TS Advanced Radiation Medicine, Oakridge, TN ([more details here](#))
- **April 18-19:** International Conference on Education, Transportation & Disaster Management (ICETDM 2024); Hong Kong ([more details here](#))
- **April 22-26:** Field Management of Chemical and Biological Casualties (FCBC), Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD ([more details here](#))
- **April 22-23:** International Conference on Emergency Medicine & Public Health (ICEMN 2024) London, United Kingdom ([more details here](#))
- **April 23-25:** INFOPOL; Exhibition dedicated to disaster response units and emergency services equipment; Kortrijk, Belgium ([more details here](#))
- **April 23-25:** ResCon International – The Global Resilience Summit, New Orleans, LA, USA ([more details here](#))
- **April 2024:** Hostile Environment Medicine Course, Namibia ([more details here](#))

DISASTER EDITORIALS

We Are All Disaster Docs



Larissa Unruh, MD, MPH

I realized in the early days of COVID, that every one of us, from the newest EM intern to the most seasoned emergency guru, is a disaster doc. This isn't limited to the occasional mass casualty event; it is a daily reality every time we set foot in the emergency department. The ED not only plays a leading role in acute disaster response, such as during the fires in Lahaina, Hawaii,

or in the aftermath of Hurricane Idalia, but given the state of healthcare in our country—with issues that include overcrowding, long wait times, and ED boarding—many emergency departments function in mass casualty mode more often than not. Unfortunately, neither the number of acute mass casualty events, nor the chronic state of ED congestion is improving any time soon; in fact, the situation will likely worsen. As emergency doctors it is imperative that we recognize these trends and prepare ourselves, to the best of our abilities, to confront head-on the evolving nature of our profession.

At its core, a disaster is an imbalance between resources and needs—a condition that mirrors the current baseline state of most EDs. Consequently, the ability to function in high stress, low resource situations is a specialized skill required of every emergency medicine physician. The extreme example of the emergency physician's crucial role in disaster response was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic when EM doctors were expected to continue

working, reuse PPE, and allocate finite resources such as ventilators, testing swabs, and even ICU beds for what seemed like, an ever-expanding number of critically ill patients. Smaller-scale examples of resource imbalance, however, occur daily. For instance, spending two hours during a shift trying to transfer a patient to a specialized mirrors the imbalance between resources and needs that, on a larger scale, qualifies as a disaster situation.

Beyond the everyday disaster of the over-crowded ED, any one of us could, by random chance, be part of the ED team on-shift when one of our communities is struck by an acute disaster or mass casualty event, and the number of such situations in the US is increasing. According to a September 2023 New York Times article, the country was already experiencing a record number of billion-dollar weather-related disasters. In addition to climate change-related events, we can anticipate regular occurrences of mass shootings, acts of terrorism, as well as political and social unrest.

While not every EM doctor aspires to join a DMAT team or participate in developing hospital response plans or training exercises, each of us, by virtue of our chosen field—emergency medicine—is a disaster responder. Therefore, every emergency medicine physician needs a solid foundation in disaster medicine basics. The ACEP Disaster Section is committed to supporting not only those individuals specifically interested in disaster medicine, but the daily practice of every EM provider. I strongly encourage you to consider joining the ACEP Disaster Medicine Section. Your support and input will help us identify the most useful content and resources, so that we can continue to increase the value we bring to the practice of emergency medicine. Because, ultimately we are all disaster docs.

Additional Disaster Resources

Podcasts



The Disaster Project
([listen here](#))



WDEM Pre-Hospital and Disaster
([listen here](#))



Disaster Podcast
([listen here](#))



Red-Med
([listen here](#))

What to Read

- Semenza JC and Ko AI. Fossil-Fuel Pollution and Climate Change: Waterborne Diseases that re Sensitive to Climate Variability and Climate Change. *N Engl J Med.* 2023. Vol 389 No 23.
- Sakamoto et al. Victim profiles and revealed issues of type 1 Emergency Medical Team in the first minutes of a mega earthquake in Turkey. *American Journal of Disaster Medicine.* Vol 18. No 1 (2023).
- Kirsch TD. Creative Nonfiction: Everyday Ghosts. December 28, 2023. *jmwwblog.*
- Scales SE, et al. Chickenpox Outbreaks in Three Refugee Camps on Mainland Greece, 2016-2017: A Retrospective Study. *Prehosp Disaster Med.* 2023 Dec. 18:1-10.

MEMBER HIGHLIGHT



Marc Rosenthal, DO, PhD, FACEPS, FAEMS

Dr. Marc Rosenthal is currently an assistant professor in emergency medicine at Wayne State University School of Medicine where he served as the EMS and Emergency Management Director, as well as the associate director for the EMS fellowship at Wayne State. He is also a Wilderness Search and Rescue responder and a responding member for the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS). He was recently awarded the ACEP Disaster Medical Sciences Award which was presented at ACEP 2023.

What inspired you to get involved in emergency medicine and ultimately disaster medicine?

Would love to say it was an easy question, but unfortunately it is not. I started life planning on a career in physics, and in particular nuclear physics. However, while in college, I joined our brand-new campus-based EMS service, Five Quad Volunteer Ambulance Service. To me this was service to our community. I continued as a volunteer EMT and later volunteer paramedic until the end of my DO internship. But before that, I moved through the academic ladder. I did my BS in physics then graduate school in physics at Yale for 5 years to earn a PhD in experimental nuclear physics. As a postdoc in medical physics and later as a faculty member at the University of Pittsburgh I continued in EMS.

While working on research projects in the medical school, I sort of got annoyed with clinical protocols that were modified by clinicians on particular patients. When I complained, they just stated I was not a physician and, therefore, did not understand medicine and they would modify a protocol. Obviously, for clinical projects this is a significant issue. So, I decided to go to medical school to solve the issue!

Based on my EMS background, EM was a natural choice for me. While a Paramedic in Pittsburgh, I was involved in our EMS service, member of the board, Treasurer, and eventually President/Chief. I was involved in multiple disaster responses and was also involved with Wilderness Search and Rescue with the Allegheny Mountain Rescue Group, a member group of the Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference.

When the chance came to join the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) as a resident, I jumped at the chance and never looked back. While at Wayne State University and the Detroit Medical Center (DMC), I had the chance to become medical director of EMS and Emergency Management which solidified my interest in disaster medicine along with the NDMS system.

What were some of the key milestones or achievements in your professional journey?

I guess my milestones would include my PhD in Physics, easy entry into EMS as a college student, residency at Saginaw Cooperative Hospital with encouragement to join the NDMS system and deploy and finally, the offer of EMS/Disaster Medicine position with the DMC.

What are your research interests?

My research interests have been more focused on supply utilization by disaster teams and compared to utilization in the ED as a model to predict needs. In addition, recently we have been involved in looking at half-mask respirators for respiratory protection with a grant from NIOSH/CDC.

What are some lesser-known aspects of your life that have influenced your work?

My post-doctoral work in medical physics, merging my background of nuclear physics with medicine. But this also dovetailed well with emergency management in nuclear issues. Finally, my training as a physicist was integral in my ability to function as a disaster physician.

Are there any upcoming projects or initiatives that you are currently involved in?

At this point in my life, I am partially retired. So not really looking for new projects. However, I am looking at joining the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary which would allow working as a volunteer in medical clinics, etc.

Do you have any hobbies outside of medicine?

Hobbies, yes. I have been a lifelong sailor and racer. I teach sailing to adults, and race on my 1993 Beneteau First 38s5 keelboat. We have not done that bad at all. Have raced many Port Huron Mackinac races. But we also keep a sailboat in Florida, a 56ft Ted Brewer Custom Ketch which I have been updating/repairing for future long-distance sails. One can say my hobby is both racing/sailing as well as boat repair. I am an Amateur Radio Operator for over 50 years as well as a member of RACES while in Detroit. Finally, I have backpacked a lot, especially when I was younger and pretty much run about 5 days a week.

How do you stay motivated and innovative in your work?

I guess I keep motivated by succeeding, at times, in improving emergency management at the hospital level but also in response. Responding in times of need or for National Special Security Events provides training, but more importantly, service to our country. That keeps me motivated.

What advice do you have for aspiring professionals in disaster medicine?

Advice, well probably worth only a dime. But, be passionate about what you do, take every chance to learn more about disaster medicine, but also deploy whether through the NDMS system, medical reserve corps, the military or an NGO, give of yourself. It will seed ideas for projects and provide service to those who are in need. Finally, critically look at your strengths and weaknesses, see where you can put your strength to good use within your hospital/medical school or at a higher level, county/region/state or national. Also do not forget why you entered medicine and in particular, disaster medicine.

2023: YEAR IN DISASTER PHOTOS



January | Philippines

Source: Floodlist ([full article](#)) Flood damage Misamis Occidental, Northern Mindanao, Philippines, January 2023. Photo: Province of Misamis Occidental



February | Turkey/Syria

Source: Aljazeera ([full article](#)) People carry a body bag as local residents wait for their relatives to be pulled out from the rubble of collapsed buildings in Hatay. Photo: Bulent Kilic/AFP

March | Malawi



Source: CNN ([full article](#)) People line a muddy road in this image tweeted by Malawi Red Cross Society on March 13
Photo: Malawi Red Cross Society

April | USA



Source: Arkansas Democrat Gazette ([full article](#))
Man removes debris from tornado damage in Cole, Oklahoma
Photo: AP/The Oklahoman/Steve Sisney

May | Myanmar



Source: CNN ([full article](#)) Residents stand on damaged boats after cyclone Mocha in Sittwe, Myanmar
Photo: Sai Aung/AFP/Getty Images



Source: CNN ([full article](#)) People make their way through puddles while walking in the middle of a street littered with garbage following heavy rains in Port-au-Prince. Photo: Ariana Cubillos/AP

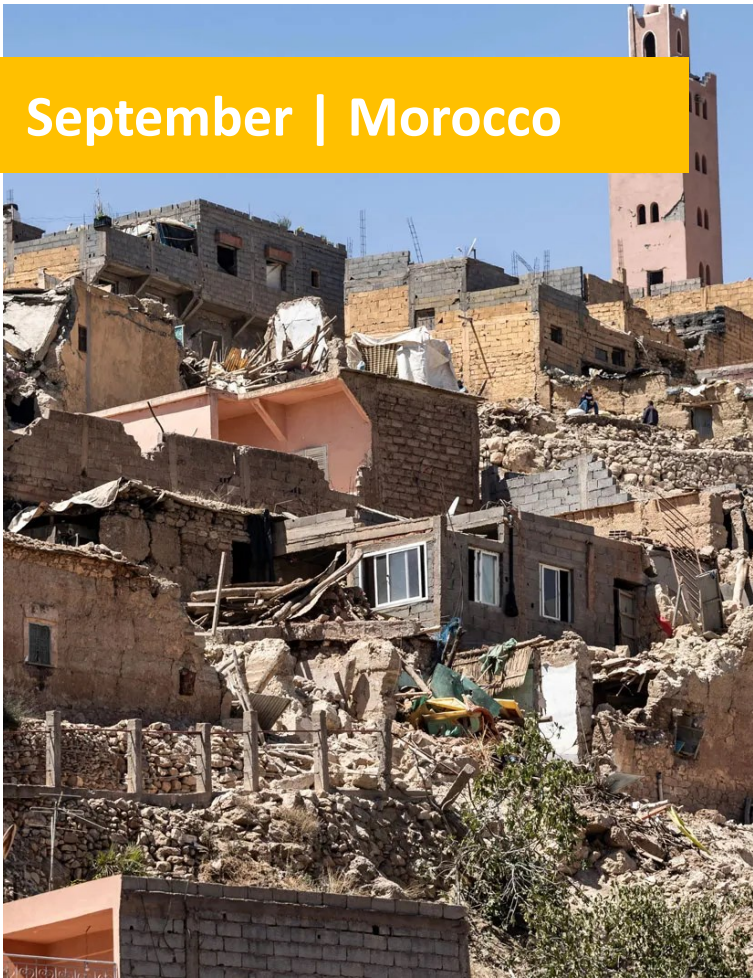


Source: Bloomberg ([full article](#)) Rescuers transfer trapped people in Zhuozhou, Hebei Province, on Aug. 2
Photo: China News Service/Getty Images



Source: Kyodo News ([full article](#)) Car wreckage on the shore of Maui Island in Hawaii after wildfires
Photo: Hawaii governor's office

September | Morocco



Source: Britannica ([full article](#)) The minaret of a mosque standing behind damaged or destroyed houses after an earthquake struck the town of Moulay Brahim, Morocco, on September 8, 2023.
Photo: Fadel Senna—AFP/Getty Images

Libya



Source: Britannica ([full article](#)) UN relief officials and others noted that mud-contaminated water in Derna could lead to a rise in water-borne diseases in the city.
Photo: AFP/Getty Images

October | Afghanistan



Source: The Economist ([full article](#)) Over 2,000 have died in Afghanistan's terrible earthquake in October 2023.
Photo: AP

November | Nepal



Source: The Kathmandu Post ([full article](#)) A house in Aathbiskot Municipality-12 of West Rukum damaged by the quake.
Photo:



December | China

Source: WSJ ([full article](#)) Search and rescue operations were underway in northwestern China, after a 5.9-magnitude earthquake struck Gansu province, killing more than 100 people. Photo: Zhang Ling/Xinhua/Zuma Press