

AIHA Project Helps Expand Emergency and Disaster Response Capacity at Philippine General Hospital



With support from the Dr. Joseph R. Masci Legacy Project, AIHA recently conducted a multidisciplinary emergency and disaster response exercise at Philippine General Hospital in Manila.

The Filipino capital of Manila faces the highest risk of natural disaster of any metropolitan area in the world. As the country's largest tertiary hospital and only academic medical center, [Philippine General Hospital](#) (PGH) must be ready for anything man or mother nature throws its way.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, PGH served as the designated COVID-19 hospital for the entire country, which is currently home to nearly 118 million people. PGH fulfilled this emergency response mission expertly, but that meant the specialty care services the facility provides to the population were largely unavailable during the pandemic.

Since late 2024, AIHA has been working with PGH to develop new and updated pandemic, mass casualty, and other strategic response plans thanks to support from the [Dr. Joseph R. Masci Legacy Project](#).

Through this project, AIHA has been supporting both virtual exchanges and multiple site visits that bring together a broad range of disciplines to understand opportunities and limitations, as

well as to foster relationships and synergies that are at the core of emergency preparedness and response, regardless of the threat.

Mobilizing technical assistance from international experts – particularly experts from [NYC Health + Hospitals Corporation](#) – the AIHA team has collaborated with PGH to develop a new phased approach to pandemic and emergency response designed to ensure that hospital departments will be used sequentially as needed while leaving as many services as possible available to meet the needs of the population.

AIHA has helped PGH improve their preparedness for mass casualty and chemical contamination events through tabletop exercises, modification of plans, and expert coaching. Work on pandemic preparedness also revealed opportunities to improve response protocols for special pathogens, as well as day-to-day improvements in infection prevention policy and practice. In some instances, solutions developed are meant to address complex health threats like Ebola, while others are as simple as ensuring better availability of hand sanitizer to stem the spread of hospital-borne infections.

PGH continues to optimize their practices to protect patients and staff, while maintaining capability to respond to emergencies. The hospital is now better prepared to not only respond to a wide range of incidents, but also to apply that knowledge through the Disaster Risk Reduction Center at the University of the Philippines, which trains and improves the skills of others.

This expanded capacity puts PGH at the vanguard of the country's response to natural disasters and other ongoing risks of mass casualty events ranging from building collapses, mass shootings, fires, and other emergencies.

Below are some scenes from the recent training exercise.



