



Create Interstate Compacts and Covid Research Accelerators

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The emergency management literature provides a framework of steps for states that are crucial to planning for and recovering from a disaster: Prevention, Preparedness, Response, Mitigation, and Recovery. The Response at the state level requires coordination and management of resources, and a few critical pieces of data: the number of hospital beds, amount of personal protective equipment needed for frontline medical staff, and amount of critical equipment required for severe cases. While reports regarding the lack of critical equipment available in the United States are alarming, state and local governments do have a few tools at their disposal to leverage buying power and create integrated networks of information sharing across state borders. **Interstate compacts for resource sharing and business or research incubator centers for timely, critical knowledge and resource production are two effective interventions for states in the Response-stage.**

The creation of **interstate compacts to manage the sharing of resources and information** is an option for states as granted by the U.S. Constitution, provided that Congress approves. Twenty states and the District of Columbia have already joined the Civil Defense and Disaster Compact, which authorizes entry into bilateral or multilateral agreements to establish mutual aid and disaster assistance, and all 50 states are members of the **Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)**. EMAC was created in 1994 after Hurricane Andrew; the scale of devastation in Florida made it apparent to state leaders that even with federal aid, states needed to develop a mutual aid process to facilitate the sharing of resources in future disasters. Examples of the effective deployment of resources, people, and funds through interstate compacts can be found in responses to **Hurricane Andrew**, **Hurricane Katrina**, and during the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Revisiting these state compacts should be a first step in creating flexible response plans and resource sharing. Although in recent weeks we have seen states in the Northeast and West create compacts, it is unclear if these rely on the EMAC framework which already exists.

Policymakers can also **tap business incubator organizations for the development of much needed products within each state**. Many states are already home to business incubators, which are an important resource for the development of innovative techniques in manufacturing, health, and research and development. Currently, for example, Michigan State University and other university-based incubators have created ways to sanitize N95 masks for safe reuse. As of 2011, incubators specializing in manufacturing and technology — keys to what states need during the pandemic — made up a combined **44% of incubators** in the United States. Exploring the existing incubator networks within each state and mining the **National Business Incubator Association** to determine which micro-enterprise member businesses might be able to respond in producing much needed products for healthcare workers is another way to maximize in state resources, increase collaboration, and minimize delays in supply chains in states.