Basic Concepts for Business Continuity Planning

What is business continuity?

Business Continuity (BC) is defined as the capability of the organization to continue delivery of products or services at acceptable predefined levels following a disruptive incident.*

Business continuity planning (BCP) includes the development of policies, protocols, and documents to help your organization maintain health care delivery operations during an emergency or disaster.

BCP also includes the implementation of mitigation activities before an incident occurs to minimize disruption to your organization.

From the Business Continuity Institute, which cites ISO 22301:2012.

Why is BCP important?

BCP can help an organization during an emergency or disaster to:

- Minimize liability.
- Meet compliance, regulatory, and funding requirements.
- Protect patient safety by ensuring consistent access to care.
- Maintain the public image of your center and public trust in your providers.
- Maintain revenue by continuing to see patients and to bill for services rendered in a timely manner.

What is the difference between BCP and Emergency Management?

Emergency Management (EM)	Business Continuity Planning (BCP)
➢ Focused on the *response to the specific hazards* of an emergency or disaster.	➢ Focused on *maintaining processes to support your organization's essential services* during an emergency or disaster, as well as those that support restoration of normal operations as quickly as possible. ➢ Part of the Emergency Operations Plan or maintained separately.

What are the key aspects of BCP?

1. **Create a planning team.** It is important to have representation from across the organization to participate in BCP because executive level support is needed, as well as subject matter expertise to inform the protocols and processes that are essential to maintaining operations. In addition to executive level staff, ensure Finance is included, as are representatives from the emergency management team, information technology (IT), clinical services, and administration teams.

2. **Perform a risk assessment.** Identify potential hazards, such as through the conduct of a Hazard Vulnerability Analysis (HVA), that may impact your organization's ability to deliver patient care.

3. **Identify and prioritize essential services.** A critical step in BCP is identifying the essential services each department/area of your organization needs to maintain during an emergency or disaster, and the supporting processes, applications, interdependencies, etc. that need to be maintained to support these essential services. As part of this process, your organization will assess the impact that disruption to these essential services will have on its ability to continue health care delivery during an incident.

4. **Document response and recovery actions in a plan.** Having a written plan ensures that everyone in the organization is working from the same set of protocols during continuity operations.

5. **Distribute the plan and train staff in their roles.** The plan is only useful if staff are familiar with it, and understand their roles and responsibilities under the plan.

6. **Exercise the plan and modify it accordingly.** Training and exercising should be conducted in a continuous cycle to maintain knowledge of the plan among organization staff. Ongoing, necessary improvements to the plan from lessons learned should be made to ensure that it will support maintenance of essential services during an emergency or disaster.

What are the 4 phases of BCP implementation?

Phase I
Readiness and Preparedness

Event/Threat

Phase II
Activation

0-12 hours following incident

Phase III
Continuity Operations

12 hours-30 days or until reconstitution

Phase IV
Reconstitution