


●●● April 28, 2026




Central New York Communications and Situational Awareness Workgroup



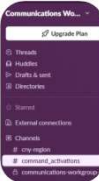
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SUNY Upstate Medical University

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Communications and Situational Awareness Workgroup



- About the Workgroup
- Workgroup Deliverables
- Slack Channel
- GIS Contact List
- Live Demonstrations

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Communications and Situational Awareness Workgroup


About the Workgroup

Problem/Gaps

- 1.) Lack of easily accessible HEPC contact database that lists all communication pathways an agency can be reached through.
- 2.) Lack of a redundant method to communicate with the entire HEPC during facility incidents

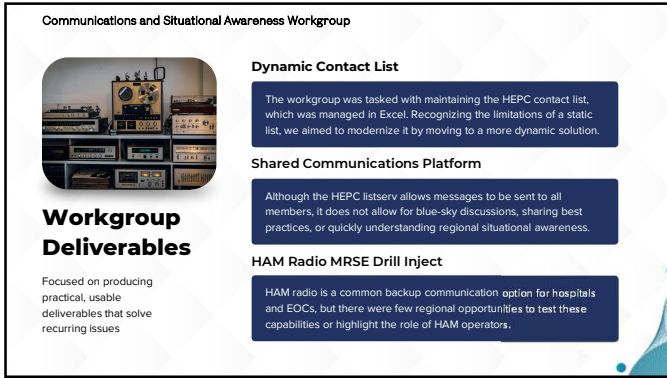
Workgroup Description

The purpose of the workgroup is to facilitate interoperable communications and situational awareness between HEPC agencies during active incidents and blue-sky periods. This workgroup will create a series of communications resources that will foster connectivity among agencies.



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Workgroup Deliverables

Focused on producing practical, usable deliverables that solve recurring issues

- Dynamic Contact List**
The workgroup was tasked with maintaining the HEPC contact list, which was managed in Excel. Recognizing the limitations of a static list, we aimed to modernize it by moving to a more dynamic solution.
- Shared Communications Platform**
Although the HEPC Letserv allows messages to be sent to all members, it does not allow for blue-sky discussions, sharing best practices, or quickly understanding regional situational awareness.
- HAM Radio MRSE Drill Inject**
HAM radio is a common backup communication option for hospitals and EOCs, but there were few regional opportunities to test these capabilities or highlight the role of HAM operators.

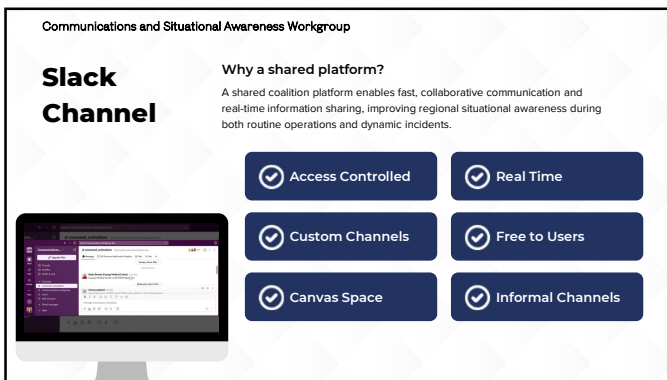
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Slack Channel

Why a shared platform?
A shared coalition platform enables fast, collaborative communication and real-time information sharing, improving regional situational awareness during both routine operations and dynamic incidents.

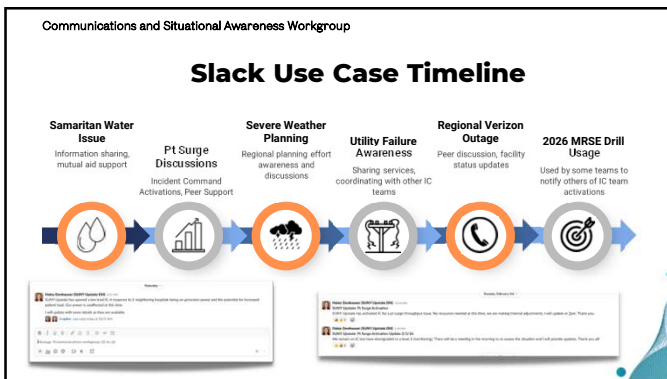
- ✓ Access Controlled
- ✓ Real Time
- ✓ Custom Channels
- ✓ Free to Users
- ✓ Canvas Space
- ✓ Informal Channels



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Slack Use Case Timeline



Samaritan Water Issue
Information sharing, mutual aid support

Pt Surge Discussions
Incident Command Activations, Peer Support

Severe Weather Planning
Regional planning effort awareness and discussions

Utility Failure Awareness
Sharing services, coordinating with other IC teams


Regional Verizon Outage
Peer discussion, facility status updates

2026 MRSE Drill Usage
Used by some teams to notify others of IC team activations

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Challenges & Solutions



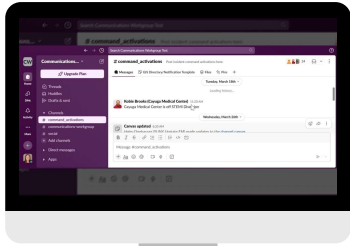
- Challenges**
 - There does have to be admins for the site, and people do have to maintain a membership roster
 - Most effective when you have the app on your phone and some companies don't allow that
 - We don't have everyone loaded into the Slack right now, there is a small sample group using it
- Solutions**
 - DOH regional staff or HTCs can serve as admins; as staff move roles, work emails naturally expire
 - The app is still useful on a desktop version; the biggest challenge is knowing where to go for information
 - We plan to add CNY to the Slack at the next in-person HEPC meeting, this will allow for additional testing

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Slack Demo

[Demo Link](#)




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GIS Contact List

Why a dynamic contact list?
 A "live" contact list is essential for coalition members responding to a crisis at their facility. Outdated contacts can lead to delays in incident stabilization, and GIS mapping of contact lists adds a helpful visual component.



- Hosted by the HTC
- Can be exported
- LIVE** Updated in real time
- Link can be within Slack
- Filtered by agency type and geographic area

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Agency Name	Agency Address	Incident Command	Name	Position/Title
Cayuga Medical Center	101 Yates Dr. Ithaca, NY, 1...		Matt Zurcher	
Gouverneur Hospital	77 W Barney St, Gouverneur...		Donna Wilson	
Upstate Medical University	750 E Adams St, Syracuse		Christopher Dufkani	Director

Issues Addressed

A contact list is not situational awareness — we still need to know who to call and where partner agencies are located. Additionally, the addition of GIS mapping gives a visualization to regional impacts and facility status

Outdated Lists

Static Excel lists that are only updated once a year

Access

This lives online and may be accessible in downtime

Visualization

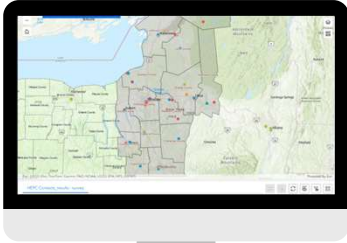
Easy to see what partners are near you and impacted

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GIS Demo

[Demo Link](#)



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Moving Forward

The CNY communications and situational awareness workgroup is committed to the continued development of these tools, as well as others to promote better situational awareness and resiliency across the CNY region and NYS.

- ▶ **Member Expansion**


We plan to continue to add facilities to the Slack and GIS. The GIS currently has most CNY facilities. We are investigating a paid subscription for Slack as well.
- ▶ **Integration into Workflows**

A focus of next year's deliverables will be helping agencies integrate these tools into their response plans, including "cheat sheets" and hands-on technical support.
- ▶ **Tool Expansion**

We are looking to build diverse Slack channels that can be used as targeted places to get/ask for information. We would like to add some incident detail information to the GIS options.


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Thank You

Questions?



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