

# Emergency care lagging in Katrina recovery

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Emergency physicians say medical response systems in areas most affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are still struggling to recover.

More than three quarters of the physicians surveyed say the system is not ready for another hurricane or mass casualty event, a survey by the American College of Emergency Physicians reported.

More than half of the doctors said there has been little to no progress in the repair of the emergency care system in their communities.

Ninety-three percent of emergency physicians said the number of available beds is at least 25 percent below what is needed to care for patients. Nearly all said their emergency departments were experiencing staffing shortages in areas such as nursing.

"It's frustrating for patients and doctors to see so little progress in one year," said Dr. James Moises of Tulane Medical Center and president of the Louisiana chapter of ACEP.

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