About CDHAM: Advancing medicine in humanitarian and disaster relief

The vision: To contribute to national security by achieving regional and global stability through health care diplomacy.

The U.S. military has a long history of responding to disasters and participating in humanitarian assistance missions. Until recently, however, these missions were considered less important than traditional combat and combat support missions. Events in the 21st century have made it clear that our national security depends on stability around the globe.

This was emphasized in recent Department of Defense (DOD) guidance establishing stability operations, including humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HA/DR), as missions with a priority equal to combat operations.

The mission: To provide support to Department of Defense agencies, through education & training, consultation, direct support and scholarly activities, regarding the role of health care in response to disasters and humanitarian assistance missions.

The Center for Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance Medicine (CDHAM) was formally established at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) by the Defense Appropriations Act of 1999. Organized within the Department of Military and Emergency Medicine at USUHS, CDHAM is postured as the Defense Department’s focal point for academic aspects of medical stability operations.

The successful delivery of aid depends on a coordinated effort between the host nation, United Nations agencies, other governmental organizations, and many NGOs. With respect to HA/DR missions, the DOD will function in a supporting role to other agencies, such as the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Effectiveness requires achieving synergy by optimizing each participant's relative strengths. Although the primary target audience for this Guide to Nongovernmental Organizations for the Military, 2nd edition, is the Department of Defense, it is intended to be a practical source of information about many NGOs for the entire humanitarian assistance community. It is hoped that it will also serve as a bridge to better understanding and cooperation.

I would like to recognize Dr. Lynn Lawry for her efforts revising this guide as an author and the senior editor. Without her expertise and dedication, it would not be the quality product it is. It is also appropriate to recognize the work done by Mr. Grey Frandsen as author of the initial guide.

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