

A report requested by Rep. Henry A. Waxman, Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, and Rep. Charlie Melancon finds that since 2002, the effectiveness of the National Disaster Medical System – a key component of the nation’s emergency response capacity — has been eroded by mismanagement, bureaucratic reshuffling, and inadequate funding. As a result, when Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, the system was unprepared, resulting in major failures in the medical response.

The report finds that Administration officials were warned about NDMS deficiencies as early as 2002 and that the transfer of NDMS to the Department of Homeland Security in 2003 further undermined NDMS effectiveness. Alarms sounded again when “after-action” reports from the 2004 hurricane season documented serious breakdowns in planning, supply management, communications, and leadership and two internal reports in 2005 raised more questions about the capabilities of NDMS. Despite these persistent warnings that NDMS needed reform, the Administration did nothing to improve the system.

Documents and Links

- [HHS Report on Hurricanes Frances and Ivan](#)
- [DHS Report on Medical Readiness](#)
- [Oregon-2 DMAT Team's After-Action Report](#)
- [FEMA-NDMS After-Action Report \(PowerPoint\)](#)
- [Report: The Decline of the National Disaster Emergency Response System](#)
- [2002 HHS Report](#)