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The Society for Disaster Medicine and Public Health Inc had planned its 3rd Annual Meeting for 27, 28 and 29 September of 2017. As preparation and planning continued, Hurricane Harvey attained its peak intensity and simultaneously slammed into the Texas coast with devastating results. Many of our members, committed speakers and potential attendees found themselves either deployed or reassigned in support of the response to Harvey. Given the timeliness for the hurricane and our meeting we decided to proceed with our event and incorporate the hurricane response into the program.

Little did we suspect three additional major hurricanes, Irma, Jose and Maria would wreak further havoc throughout the Caribbean and within the US mainland over the next several weeks. This, of course, had a direct impact on our meeting but by then we were fully committed and did the best we could to include a visit to the USNS Comfort literally hours before she set out for Puerto Rico, which sustained massive damage to its infrastructure. The Society meeting was relatively successful, given the circumstances, and through discussions with several of the attendees we decided to pursue publication of a special issue of DMPHP on the public health impacts of the serial hurricanes, much as we had done with the Ebola Epidemic of 2014.

The objective of these event-specific special issues is the rapid publication of our peer-reviewed articles with the intention of better informing the recovery based on the conclusions and recommendations of those involved in the response. The articles are collected over time and can eventually form a collection. This approach both provides a historical perspective, and allows for the compilation of prospective and retrospective studies that require a longer time to complete.

A recurrent problem with this approach is securing funding to support the effort for the Serial Hurricane Special Issue when it was suggested that we apply for a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson (RWJF) Foundation. This was done and RWJF provided the funding to make the special issue a reality. The current issue of the journal presents those papers already processed and electronically published.

Additional paper for the special collection will be published over time.

We all owe a depth of gratitude to RWJF for not only supporting this work but for all its support for public health. An additional, indirect benefit of the grant was the Caribbean-Strong Summit, an initiative conceived out of efforts to encourage manuscript preparation by those intimately involved in the response to the hurricanes of 2017.