18.7: XVIII Glossary

**Chelation therapy:** Treatment for heavy metal poisoning such as mercury, arsenic, and lead. Chelators are medications that bind to the metals in the bloodstream to increase urinary excretion of the substance.

**Decontamination:** Any process that removes or neutralizes a chemical hazard on or in the patient in order to prevent or mitigate adverse health effects to the patient; protect emergency first responders, health care facility first receivers, and other patients from secondary contamination; and reduce the potential for secondary contamination of response and health care infrastructure.

**Disaster:** A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability, and capacity that lead to human, material, economic, and environmental losses and impacts.

**Disaster management:** Response to a disaster with integration of emergency response plans throughout the life cycle of a disaster event.

**Emergency preparedness:** The planning process focused on avoiding or ameliorating the risks and hazards resulting from a disaster to optimize population health and safety. The process includes four key concepts: preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery. Evaluation occurs after a disaster event as the planning process continues.

**Environmental health hazard:** A substance or pathogen that has the ability to cause an adverse health event in individuals or communities.

**Mitigation:** Actions taken to prevent or reduce the cause, impact, and consequences of disasters. When a disaster occurs, actions are taken to save lives, treat injuries, and minimize the effect of the disaster. Immediate needs are addressed, such as medical treatment, shelter, food, and water, as well as psychological support.
Preparedness: Planning, training personnel, and providing educational activities regarding potential disastrous events. Planning includes evaluating environmental risks and social vulnerabilities of a community.

Recovery: Restoration efforts occur concurrently with regular operations and activities, such as preventing or reducing stress-related illnesses and excessive financial burdens.

Resiliency: The ability to cope with adversity and recover emotionally from a traumatic event.

Response: Actions taken in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, such as saving lives, treating injuries, and minimizing the effects of the disaster. Immediate needs are addressed, such as medical treatment, shelter, food, and water, as well as psychological support of survivors.

Simple Triage and Rapid Treatment (START): A triage system from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that prioritizes victims by color (red, yellow, green, and black) for efficient and effective treatment.

Social vulnerability: The characteristics of a person or a community that affect their capacity to anticipate, confront, repair, and recover from the effects of a disaster.

State of emergency: Status that is declared when the public health or the economic stability of a community is threatened, and extraordinary measures of control may be needed.

Triage: Prioritizing care for individuals affected by a disaster or emergency.