Preparing Imminent Evacuation of a Rural Hospital During a Fire

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Objectives

- Overview of Helena – Fork Fire
- Hospital’s immediate response
- Actions and daily activities
- Decision making and patient impact
- Lessons learned

Source: https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/36898044495072914/?lp=true
Trinity Hospital

- Critical Access Hospital, serving 14,000 community members, 3,200 square miles of mountainous terrain (4–5 people per sq. mi)
- 24-hour emergency room, 4 ER beds, 25 acute care beds, 25 skilled nursing beds.
- 171 employees
- Dedicated in 1950
Trinity County Public Health

- Local Health Department, administering and coordinating over 12 multi-faceted public health programs, serving 17 frontier communities within Trinity County (population 14,000)
- Medical Health Operational Area Coordination (MHOAC)
- Seven Employees
Helena–Fork Fire

- **August 30, 2017 at 5:05pm**
  - Volunteer fire response
  - Evacuations ordered, road closures

- **August 31, 2017**
  - 5,000 acres, 0% containment
  - Air quality, wind, excessive heat warning
  - 61 engines, four water tenders, 385 personnel
  - 100 people sheltering, large animals at park

- **September 3, 2017**
  - 9,000 acres (14 square miles), 14% containment
  - Fire lines, preparation for second evacuation, traffic controls, schools closed
  - 132 engines, 11 water tenders, 1,450 personnel

Source: InciWeb
Geographical Location

Source: Worldatlas.com

Source: Trinity County Emergency Operations Plan
Helena Fire Movement

Source: Google Maps
Helena Fire Movement (cont.)

Source: InciWeb
Day 14 Overview
- 18,000 acres (28 square miles), 56% contained
- Investigation – human caused
- Schools reopened (closed for 13 days)
- Local Assistance Center (LAC) – 9/6/18
- Traffic stops, road closures
- Sheltering (evacuation orders lifted)
- Recovery, health and safety hazards
- 72 homes, 61 outbuildings destroyed
  - Community with 680 residents (over 20% of housing units)

Source: InciWeb
U.S. Census
Leadership exited Board meeting at 1900 surrounded by smoke

Reverse 9-1-1 Evacuation Call—not validated

Began answering phone calls from staff

Shelter in Place

Called Administrator on call at Mercy Medical Center (1 hour away) to gage bed availability

Setup debrief/planning meeting for next morning
August 30, 2017 (evening)
- Staff calls, calls to receiving hospital

August 31, 2017
- Morning debriefs
  - Six staff displaced
  - One MIA
  - One ER physician late (3.5 hour drive)
- Patient/Resident Assessment
  - 13 total (seven residents, six patients)
  - Closed two admits
  - HEPA Units

September 1, 2017
- Called families of residents
- CDPH Called – presented evacuation plan
- Shelter in-place
Daily Activities

- Debriefings: staffing and supplies, situational awareness, communication, patient census/disposition, director “roundtable”
- Evacuation planning, needs of receiving hospital (i.e., credentialing, charts)
- Staffing assessment (displaced, absent)
- Discharge and admission planning
- Update Mercy Medical Center Redding

If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.
~Benjamin Franklin
Actions

- Just-in-time training
- Staff credentialing
- Identified transportation needs and resources
- Agreement with precious cargo
- Contacted Public Health for HEPA units/filters
- Staff assessment for historical knowledge
Actions (cont.)

- Regular contact with CDPH
- Ordered respiratory medications
- Contacted families of all patients/residents
- Home Health – evacuation plans
- Attended community meetings
- Clinic – high risk patients

Source: www.mcmedical.org
Decision Making

- Hazard vulnerability assessment
- Hospital plans
- Emergency response reports
- Team meetings
- Social media
- Resources
- Relationships
- Weather, smoke and other fires

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1A-A7nR7_4
Helena Fire 5 Latest on September 3, 2017
Patient Encounter Impact

- Home Health – no missed visits
- Physical Therapy – 23 cancellations, 26 no shows (over 25%)
- Hayfork Clinic – 19 Cancellations and 25 no shows (over 25%)
- Weaverville Clinic – 136 cancellations and 85 no shows (over 50%)
- ER – 22 poison oak, 22 smoke-related

Source: www.trinitycounty.org
Lessons Learned

- Communication
- Relationships
- Institutional knowledge
- Historical knowledge—HICS forms
- Duel community roles—volunteer fire fighters and OES
- Hand hygiene

Source: www.trinitycounty.org
Community and Relationships

- OES
- Schools
- Local pharmacies
- Churches
- Neighboring counties
- Receiving hospitals

Source: www.trinitycounty.org
1 Year Later...

- OES restructure
- MHOAC
- HALF training for fire plan in hospital
  (high acuity low frequency)
- Resources
- CodeRED – IPAWS capability

Source: www.trinitycounty.org
Questions

- Thank you
Contact Us

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