



SPECIAL EDITION

Meeting Joint Commission Standards in Emergency Preparedness



October 29, 2014 was the designated date for all schools in the State of Mississippi to practice their procedures for what to do during a tornado. East Mississippi State Hospital (EMSH) decided it would be an excellent opportunity to involve our school, Bradley A Sanders Adolescent Complex (BASAC), in an exercise working with our local community hospitals and emergency services.

The emergency planning committee had worked for several weeks preparing for the exercise. The ultimate goal was to involve our medical personnel in a response situation that required immediate medical attention. This scenario would allow them to practice triaging patients and preparing them for transport. In addition, we needed to meet the Joint Commission requirement of having an exercise that would be above our capabilities and therefore require us to reach out to our community for assistance. We invited one of our local hospitals, Anderson Regional Medical Center (ARMC), to participate along with Lauderdale Emergency Management Agency (LEMA). The University of Mississippi Medical Center's Helicopter Flight Operations, AirCare, based at Key Field in Meridian, Mississippi also responded during the exercise.

Heather Mason of Community Services took on the task of preparing the paper patients that were to be triaged at the scene. Each patient was given multiple injuries so our medical personnel could respond and put their medical skills to work. Patients were placed outside of D Building (School) at the BASAC campus with the injuries listed and triage tags attached. Our staff were asked to evaluate the patients and place them into one of three categories; Green, Yellow and Red.

Emergency Preparedness Cont'd



The exercise began at approximately 8:00 a.m. when BASAC was placed under a code orange. At 9:07 a.m. a code black was issued for Lauderdale County. All students at the school were moved to an interior hallway as a safety precaution. At 9:16 a.m. the switchboard received a call that our school had been damaged by a tornado and that we had multiple injuries, the power was out, and trees were down. Damage to other buildings on campus was minimal. The Emergency Response Team was called to the Command Center. Larry McKnight, CAO of EMSH served as the Incident Commander for this exercise. The team began contacting Emergency Personnel within the county. Crews from the maintenance department were directed to the BASAC campus to clear the trees and debris caused by the tornado. The medical staff began to triage the patients, the AmBus (Lauderdale County School Bus Ambulance) was requested to transport the patients to ARMC. It was decided that one patient had severe injuries and required Air Lift to the University Medical Center Trauma Center. The landing zone for the helicopter would be the field between the entry gate and L Building on

EMSH main campus. At approximately 10:30 a.m., AirCare the University's helicopter transport landed on the campus. Pilot Randle Boykin and his crew, James Walters (Nurse) and David Webb (paramedic) took charge. Our very own Haley Theall from our Accreditation Division volunteered to participate in this exercise as the patient. The Airlift crew transferred the patient to their stretcher and she was placed in the AirCare helicopter for transport. Six patients were transported to ARMC via the AmBus. The other five were considered walking wounded and were driven to the hospital using EMSH vans.

The good news is all of our students survived. **Big Thanks** to our community partners, LEMA, ARMC, and the University Medical Center Helicopter Service, AirCare, for helping us be more prepared to respond in the case of a real emergency. We learned some valuable lessons during this exercise which will only make us better and that is what we are all about, becoming better in everything we do.

