



Mercy Medical Center, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. June 12, 2008. Two inches of water were pouring into the Emergency Room. Staff and volunteers worked sandbag duty as they tried to prevent flood waters from reaching the emergency generator.

Recent catastrophic events have drawn attention to hospitals' needs for cadres of trained professionals standing by to help them in emergencies, because

- Disruption of everyday communications happens frequently – in hospitals, lives and resources may be lost if alternative communications are not at hand;
- Preplanned and coordinated volunteer forces can be trained and ready to step in, ready to take over backup communications during drills, exercises, and real-life events.
- Discover what a **Radio Response Team (RRT)** can do when your hospital (or other healthcare facility) needs help;
- Custom build your own **RRT**:
 - ⇒ use staff members who are trained ham operators
 - ⇒ team them up with ham operators from the community to sustain your hospital's communication needs during drills, exercises or real-life events.



Bridging the Public Health Community



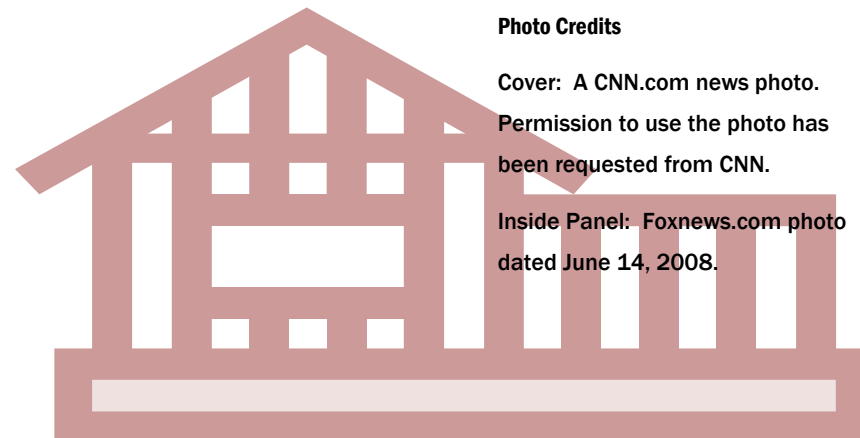
PROMOTE PROTECT PROSPER
South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control



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University of South Carolina
Center for Public Health Preparedness (USC-CPHP)

**STORMS AND DISASTERS
MAY DISRUPT OR DESTROY
NORMAL HOSPITAL
COMMUNICATIONS.**

**WHEN THEY DO, HOW WILL
YOUR HOSPITAL KEEP GOING?**



A tornado struck Sumter Regional Hospital, Americus, Georgia, after 9 PM on March 1, 2007. 55–60 patients were evacuated, but damages were so extensive the hospital later had to be razed.

SCENARIO: You have to evacuate. Land lines, cell phones, Internet, and 800 MHz radios are down. Satellite phone signals are unavailable. Where do you turn?

HAM OPERATORS CAN HELP HOSPITALS SAVE LIVES

“It was the fourth night after Hurricane Katrina, and something like a thousand patients, doctors and staff were trapped at Medical Center Louisiana in downtown New Orleans, surrounded by floodwaters...

Inside the hospital, there was no running water, no power, no phones and no Internet. Cell phones didn't work. Each day the authorities said evacuations were about to begin, but nothing happened....

Then, in the middle of the night, a pregnant woman dragged herself out of the foul, dark water surrounding the center's Charity Hospital, having managed to swim several blocks from her home...

By flashlight, doctors determined she needed a Caesarian section...

The doctors conferred...and sent upstairs for a middle-aged jazz musician sleeping on an air mattress. Richard Webb, a ham radio operator who happens to be legally blind, got an urgent message out to Texas, where they bounced it to the Cleveland Coast Guard, which was able to send a helicopter within the two-hour window necessary to save mother and baby – thanks to Richard.

This story, written by nationally-known writer Timothy Harper, is excerpted with the author's permission from his article "Frequent Flyer" in the February 2006 *Sky* magazine. Mr. Harper is based at <http://www.timharper.com>

Turn to Your RRT...

Build your Radio Response Team (RRT) from 2 groups:

- hospital staff trained and licensed as amateur (ham) radio operators, and
- local ham operators dedicated to helping with emergency responses who access the **SCHEART** radio network for drills, exercises and real-life emergencies.

Encourage hospital staff members to participate on RRTs.

When regular hospital communications are lost or become overwhelmed with emergency message traffic, hospital staff are on site to establish communication links, call in resources, and coordinate message traffic. As soon as help arrives staff can return to their hospital duties.

Encourage local ham radio operators join RRTs as hospital volunteers. They can be trained to a specific hospital's policies and protocols, and will support your facility during drills, exercises and emergencies.



Without reliable communications, hospitals face unacceptable risks.

Hospital Administrators For help building your hospital's RRT...

1. Call Bill Dease, Ham Radio Initiative Coordinator for the USC Center for Public Health Preparedness, to set up a training event to build your facility's **Radio Response Team**. Through **SCHEART**, Bill can help you find local ham operators to join your RRT. (803.978.7570 or dease@sc.edu)
2. Determine a date and location to hold training to start a **Radio Response Team**. (Training is free.)
3. Identify hospital staff who are already ham operators. Encourage their participation in your **RRT**.
4. Talk with your DHEC Regional Public Health Preparedness Director for more information about setting up a **Radio Response Team Training** for your hospital.

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Arnold School of Public Health
1233 Washington Street, Suite 700
Columbia, SC 29201

Phone: 803.978.7581

Fax: 803.978.7586

Communications: Kathleen Leopard

