

# HIPAA AND MASS CASUALTY EVENTS

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# BMC PREPARATION TO RESPOND TO A MASS CASUALTY EVENT

- ▶ BMC had developed a comprehensive emergency response plan and established incident Command structure
  - ▶ Team established and regular exercises
  - ▶ EM TRACK – CITY ON-LINE SYSTEM– BOARD FLASHING REFERRING TO PATIENTS EN ROUTE TO BMC – only seen by BMC
    - ▶ Patients are bar-coded by EMT
    - ▶ BMC adds Name, DoB, Gender, Distinguishing Marks
- ▶ PHC, Medical Intelligence Center – City of Boston’s unique system interface with BMC and other area hospitals
  - ▶ Not encrypted patient-identifying information
  - ▶ Reports status, numbers, support, supplies, casualty numbers
  - ▶ Staffing
  - ▶ Hospital condition
  - ▶ Swat team
  - ▶ Condition of city

# TIMING OF THE EVENT AT BMC

11:00 - Medical tent prepared at the Marathon Finish Line to handle runners' medical needs including injuries –BMC Surgeon whose wife was among the runners

14:50 - First bomb detonates  
BMC ED receives call from BMC MD at the scene – believes it was a manhole cover explosion

14:51 - Second bomb detonates

14:52 - BMC received notice from BMC Surgeon in the Marathon Medical Tent -Phase B notification

15:00 - First patient arrived at BMC well before notice from Boston Emergency Medical Service to BMC ED

By 15:30 - All 31 patients received at BMC

# RESPONSE BY STAFF

- ▶ Emergency Command Center open and assumed control of event management
- ▶ Clinicians, physicians and staff, including Executive Administration offered assistance - President and CEO Kate Walsh “What can I do to help?”
- ▶ Incident Response Commanders stationed in the ED to work with Law Enforcement agencies and support coordination of response to event
- ▶ Interpreters stationed in the ED
- ▶ Surgeons
- ▶ Physicians
- ▶ Clergy
- ▶ Support Staff

# SIMULTANEOUSLY...

- ▶ Heightened access controls implemented
- ▶ Equipment and Personnel arriving and mobilizing
- ▶ Moving non-marathon-related patients in ED to other ED 'pods' to prepare for in-coming bomb patients – attempting to utilize one section for the Mass Casualty patients
- ▶ Patients arriving in ambulances and other vehicles
- ▶ 31 marathon victims treated at BMC (2 unrelated to bombing)
  - ▶ 8 minor – seen and released
  - ▶ 4 moderate injuries treated and released from the ED
  - ▶ 19 Admissions
    - ▶ 12 to ICU

# FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER – REUNIFICATION OF FAMILIES AND VICTIMS

- ▶ FSC established in building convenient to ED but away from victim triage
  - ▶ Coffee, food
  - ▶ Interpreter services
  - ▶ Social Services
  - ▶ Mental Health Professionals (BMC and DMH)
  - ▶ Patient Advocates,
  - ▶ Chaplains
  - ▶ Public Safety
  - ▶ IT mobilized computers and phones
  - ▶ Assistance is hotels, airlines, transportation, etc. for family members

# SECURITY ARRIVALS

- ▶ 2 FBI Agents - interested to speak with victims
- ▶ Armed Boston Police Department Officers
- ▶ Boston Police Homicide Unit
- ▶ MA Regional SWAT team
- ▶ Armoured Tank with soldiers
- ▶ BMC Public Safety and clinical leaders appointed to assist with crime investigation and evidence collection – Acted as intermediaries between law enforcement and patients/providers/hospital administration

# COMMUNICATIONS

- ▶ Media
- ▶ Foreign Embassies
- ▶ Friends
- ▶ Social Media
- ▶ Dignitaries
- ▶ VIP's
- ▶ Celebrities
- ▶ Patient Advocates and SWs acted as intermediaries between the above and patients
- ▶ Others (prosthetic manufacturer, etc.)




# ...COMMUNICATIONS

- ▶ Calls from around the world
- ▶ Cards from around the world (from children and adults)
- ▶ Gifts from around the world
- ▶ Cards to docs and nurses

# HIPAA CHALLENGES

- ▶ Identifying patients as they arrived
- ▶ Sharing Identities of patients with those in the Family Support Center
- ▶ Determining who were family members asking about patients
- ▶ Respecting the outpouring of concern and interest by many to visit the patients while always deferring to patients' wishes
- ▶ Controlling reporter access
- ▶ Social Media
- ▶ Protecting and respecting patients' privacy was a major concern

WITHOUT INTERRUPTION TO CARE OF  
THE GREATER PATIENT POPULATION

The background features a dark gray grid pattern of small white dots. At the bottom, there is a decorative wave shape composed of a green section on the left and a yellow section on the right, separated by a white line.