Providence Holy Cross Medical Center

2008 Metrolink Train Derailment

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Introduction

On Friday, September 12, 2008, at approximately 4:23 p.m., a Union Pacific freight train collided head-on with a Metrolink commuter train in the city of Chatsworth in Los Angeles County. The accident occurred at a curved section of single track on the Metrolink Ventura County / LA County line.
Victims

- 220 individuals on board the trains
- 135 were injured
  - 85 of the injured transported to 13 hospitals
  - Approximately 46 were in critical condition
  - 2 self transported
  - 12 helicopters medevaced 40 patients using all 12 trauma centers in LA County
  - 25 deaths
Victims Continued

- Providence Holy Cross Medical Center (Level II trauma center)
  - Received 17 victims, 5 traumas, largest number of any facility.
  - Ranged in age from 17 years to 56 years
  - Variety of Injuries – minor to blunt head, traumatic chest and extremity trauma.
Overview of Derailment Scene

- Point of Impact
- Triage Area
- Tunnel Where Union Pacific Train Exited
- Approximate Location of the Red Signal the Metrolink Train “Ran Through”
Re-enactment of Derailment

View the Metrolink Locomotive Engineer Had of the Track Approaching the Curve
Re-Enactment of Derailment

View the Union Pacific Locomotive Engineer Had – 4 Seconds from Crash
Trains Closing at Over 80 MPH Combined Speed

Approaching Metrolink
Train Entering Curve
Re-enactment of Derailment

3 Seconds to Impact
Re-enactment of Derailment

2 Seconds to Impact
Re-enactment of Derailment

Impact – Combine Speed 80+ MPH
Derailment Aftermath

The Metrolink Locomotive “Telescoped” Into More Than 70% of the First Metrolink Passenger Car
Derailment Aftermath
Derailment Aftermath
Derailment Aftermath
Derailment Aftermath

Inside of First Metrolink Passenger Car After Metrolink Locomotive Was Removed
Derailment Aftermath
Derailment Aftermath

Picture taken by plane flying over crash site
Derailment Aftermath

Picture taken by plane flying over crash site
Derailment Aftermath

Picture taken by plane flying over crash site
An urbanized community in the northwest section of the city of Los Angeles.

Estimated valley population of 1.8m

Home of the San Fernando Mission

Community Outreach
- Santa Clarita Valley to the north
- Porter Ranch to the west
Providence Holy Cross Community Relationships

- Mission Hills Neighborhood Disaster Committee
  - Public and private stakeholder collaboration
  - Police
  - Fire
  - Local Medical Offices

- MOU Agreements
  - Schools

- Vendor Contacts
  - Personal interaction

- Local government and business relationships
  - Know your leaders by name

- Great Working relationship with local media
Providence Holy Cross Medical Center

- A 254-bed, not-for-profit facility, offering a full continuum of health services, from outpatient to inpatient to home health care. Providence Holy Cross operates one of the only round-the-clock trauma centers in the San Fernando Valley and surrounding communities of Los Angeles County.
Providence Holy Cross ED Stats - 2008

- Emergency Department – 61,646 Patients
- Trauma Service – 1,502 Patients
- Trauma System 25 years old in April 2009
  - 24,500 at PHCMC since 1984
- Base Radio Runs – 13,763
PHCMC Emergency Department

- Two Triage Rooms
  - Third triage space available as needed

- Emergency Department
  - Monitored beds - 25
    Multi-room and single rooms

- EDX (Emergency Department Extension)
  - Monitored beds - 8
Goal #1
- Plan, implement and coordinate activities to enhance surge capacity in trauma centers and the development of a trauma surge and burn capacity plan in coordination with other LA County trauma centers

Goal #2
- Purchase, store and maintain equipment to ensure a constant state of readiness
ReddiNet™

- ReddiNet carries critical data and communications for daily operations and crises including MCI’s.

- ReddiNet utilizes versatile technology to deploy communication networks linking hospitals, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies, first responders and public health officials.

- ReddiNet is extensively used in nearly 250 emergency response organizations throughout 17 California counties, including Los Angeles and Orange counties.
ReddiNet™ Victim List

- Developed after Glendale train collision
  - January 2005
- Viewed only by EMS and hospital personnel
- Indicates
  - Location of victim (Hospital only at this time)
  - Name
  - Age and sex
- Relies on each facility adding information
- Lessons learned
  - Tracking for ‘walking wounded’
  - Awareness of personnel as a tool
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**Providence Holy Cross Response:**

- Notified of the crash via ReddiNet
- Providence Holy Cross Medical personnel stated they could receive 6 immediate, 6 delayed, and 12 minor cases
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- **Providence Holy Cross Response**
  - In the Emergency Department:
    - The department was divided into two sections
    - One dedicated to caring for current patients and to receive non-event related patients
    - One set up to care for crash victims including traumas
  - Supplies were gathered and blood was ordered
‘Meet & Greet at Ambulance Entrance’
Providence Holy Cross Medical Center

- Providence Holy Cross Response
  - The Nursing Supervisor’s Actions:
    - Surgery was notified and elective surgeries were canceled to keep OR’s available
    - Patient discharges were hastened where appropriate to ensure bed availability
    - The Administrator on Call was apprised of the situation
    - The Marketing and Public Information staff were notified and asked to respond
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- Providence Holy Cross Response
  - Nursing Supervisor’s Actions (con’t):
    - The charge nurses were notified and asked to triage patients for possible transfer to a lower level of care
    - Spiritual Care and Clinical Social Work staff were notified and established a family care and waiting area
  - Staff Response:
    - On duty staff offered to stay; off duty staff call or arrived offering help
    - Trauma physicians and surgeons reported to the ED and offered support to staff on duty
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Providence Holy Cross Response

- The facility was locked down for access control
- Security Officers visible in all critical areas
- Public Information Officer (PIO) was stationed outside with the media
LA City Fire
LA County Fire
“Best of the Best”
Providence Holy Cross Medical Center

- Providence Holy Cross Response
  - Triage nurses met each arriving victim outside
  - Quick re-triage by fresh eyes
  - Immediately moved inside to waiting teams
Spiritual Care and Clinical Social Workers met all arriving families and escorted them away from the ED

- Gathered relevant medical information for ED team
- Supported reunification

Arriving family members taken to a private conference room
Lessons From the Metrolink Disaster

Mass Casualty Incident Conclusion:

- All victims brought to PHCMC arrived within 3 hours of the incident and all survived
- Most seriously injured victim was very alert and talking upon arrival
- Delay in arrival to medical Center was due to aggressive rescue activities
  - In many cases deceased had to be removed to get to living victims
- Victims were triaged in order rescued
  - Trauma Surgeon on site may increase victim survival
Lessons From the Metrolink Disaster

**Opportunities for Improvement**

- Initiate Code Triage
  - Code Triage was never paged
  - Ill-prepared for long-term sustainment of incident
- On scene patient identification
- Multi-MCI victim tracking
- Treat every victim as a trauma case
- Anticipate need for increased operator assistance
- Anticipate a dedicated line for family inquiries
Lessons From the Metrolink Disaster

**Successes:**
- ED and ICU– patients triaged to lower lever of care
- House Supervisor and Trauma MD collaboration
- 50/50 ED-Trauma split
- Patient tracking
- CT Scan Triage and Tracking
- ReddiNet victim list
Lessons From the Metrolink Disaster

- ED remained open to the community
- Secure ED entrance
  - Hospital locked down for access control
  - Attorneys may have been in family groups misstating who they were?!?
  - Most online information to incident is now linked to attorney offices.
- Support for families
  - Family unification
- Media management
Lessons From the Metrolink Disaster

“This is a great team which responds to emergencies as a “well oiled” machine. I am so very proud of their critical thinking and actions.”

Betty Newsom
Chief Nursing Officer
PHCMC
Public Information Officer

- The Metrolink collision – my first disaster as PIO
- Los Angeles – TV & Radio Stations Plentiful
- Medical Care & Patient Privacy are priority
- Disseminating information to press is important service to the community we serve.
Public Information Officer

- Deep understanding of what reporters need
- Partner with media to benefit both
  - Provide as much information as possible without violating privacy rights.
- Identify a Media base of operations
- Worked closely with security
  - Ensure that no reporters or photographers entered the facility.
The Media Arrived

- Within an hour of collision:
  - Ten TV trucks
  - Two radio stations
  - At least a dozen reporters and photographers
    - Newspapers
    - Major wire services
  - There were satellite trucks in the parking lot long before the victims arrived
Initial Media Information

- Initially, we could offer the press little more than number of victims, their conditions and range of injuries.

- Age range, gender breakdown, the general scene in the ED.

- Craft quotes from someone inside, a nurse, a physician, someone from the Lab.

- Harmless details offers a picture and tells a story.
PIO Duties

- At the start, I handled broadcast interviews
  - Offered as much detail as possible

- After things settled down
  - Arrange periodic interviews with ED Physicians
  - Over next two days further press conferences, one that included the mayor.
  - Two day blood drive – extremely successful

- The key is to provide as much actual information as possible – without violating anyone’s privacy.
Disaster News Coverage

- Loved ones involved craved information
- General public wants to know scope of injury and destruction
- News Reporting – important documentation of history
- Solid coverage was good for:
  - Providence Holy Cross Medical Center
  - Emergency personnel
Patient Interviews

- Gently ask those patients who are stable if they would be willing to speak with the media.
- Assure them that they are under no obligation.
- Family members often more than willing to talk.
PIO Lessons Learned

- Lessons Learned:
  - The PIO function is critical
    - Hourly press conferences
    - View of ED or victim arrival area
    - Support staff for PIO
  - Signage/Directions for Media
    - Parking
    - Restrooms/Telephones
  - Security
    - Attorneys may infiltrate family groups misstating who they were?!?
Never Forget!

Officials say at least 25 dead and 135 injured.

Reader tributes

Our family is in Seattle when we got this terrible news. Atul and his brother Aseem was my son Aiay's classmate in Vista Elementary School as well.
Questions?

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