# We Are... Prepared

#### Tenn State Hershey Medical Center—Emergency Department

#### Auntie Em, Auntie Em!!!

That's right, tornado season is upon us!

It starts here in March, peaks in May/June, and winds down in August. Warm weather fronts from the south, collide with cold weather from the north—creating the perfect conditions for super cell formation, which means potential tornados! All this is attributed to a warmer than normal Gulf of Mexico waters.

The National Weather Service is predicting a *very* active season this year—more active than 2011. Areas that were not hit hard in the 2011 season, such as the Ohio River Valley and mid-Mississippi region, are predicted to take the brunt of this year's tornado season.

So far, this has proved to be the course, with March 2nd having 648 severe storm warnings (279 were tornado warnings) and 79 confirmed torna-



dos. There were 32 deaths from the storms on the 2nd.

But with all of this activity, parts of the deep south are looking at early relief in the season with some wet weather, hoping to alleviate some of last season's severe dry/drought conditions.

The Northeast is expected to have mild temperatures from here on out, with the occa-

sional fast moving storm. No word on flooding risks yet, but that remains to be seen with hurricane season starting June 1st. Some much for Phil's six more weeks of winter... even though spring is really right around the corner.

Get out early and enjoy the warm weather with your family, friends, and Fido! Let the grilling season begin!!

# Spring 2012 ED Emergency Preparedness Committee

## Tornado Fun Facts (if there is such a thing):

- To outrun the fastest tornado, you'd need to go faster than 70 mph in a car
- The myth of opening the windows in a house will help prevent a tornado from it being destroyed is false. In fact, opening the wrong windows could allow air to rush in and blow the house apart from the inside.

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### Travel Warnings for Mexico

On February 8, 2012, the US State Department issued a travel warning for those going to south of the border due to the increase in drug cartel related violence and deaths. Though the violence is not specifically directed at US citi-

zens, there has been a particular noted increase in kidnappings and carjackings—even on well traveled highways.

Generally speaking, staying on the resorts is a traveler's best course of stay.

Any US citizens that are con-

sidering or are traveling to Mexico, should check the US State Department's website at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\_pa\_tw/tw/tw\_5665.html for up-to-date travel warnings and restrictions.

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 We Are... Prepared

#### Row, row, row your boat...

March 12th through the 16th is Flood Safety Awareness Week. Though this season isn't predicted to be a soaker—we never know what Mother Nature holds in store for us come June 1st, the start of hurricane season.

Here are some tips for flood safety:

- Always maintain vigilance of creeks and streams in your area. They can rise fast and run swift.
- Get to high ground before water begins to rise, especially if you are in a flood prone area.

- Don't allow children to play around storm drains or culverins. They can be swept away quickly or fall victim to hazards that are beneath the water.
- Make sure that you have flood insurance coverage if you are in a flood prone area. You might need additional coverage from NFIP. Apply early, it takes 30 days for flood insurance to "kick in."
- Be cautious at night when it is more difficult to see swift moving water or dangers that lurk beneath the water.



The PATRIOT-NEWS

Shipoke area of Harrisburg - 2012

### Don't Forget....

Since vacation season is coming up quickly, don't forget to bring back all those toiletries that are left out for you in your hotel.

Please bring them back and place them in the clear green Tupperware container in the respiratory therapist's office.

They are used for when staff gets "stuck" or held over in severe weather. This way

we can have nice smelling soap and don't have to use what is available here in the department.

Additionally, if there is a prediction for severe weather, bring extra clothing and toiletries from home—you might have to wear the dreaded clown scrubs. It's also always a plus to have fresh socks and other unmentionables to change into!

"The difference between a successful and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will." - Vince Lombardi

#### Your Help is Needed

WE WANT YOU!!

Interested in more than just how we as a department responds during a crisis or disaster situation?

Interested in all aspects of "homeland security?"

Want to make a difference in the department?

Want to be more involved (aka you need to

be part of a committee for your PEPs)?

Well then, become a resource member for the ED Emergency Preparedness Committee. We are just more than disasters and HAZMAT!

See AnnMarie or email her at aross@hmc.psu.edu if you are interested in becoming a member or want more information



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#### Turn Around, Don't Drown®

According to the National Weather Service, "More deaths occur due to flooding each year than from any other thunderstorm or hurricane related hazard. Many of these casualties are a result of careless or unsuspecting motorists who attempt to navigate flooded roads..."

Do not attempt to cross a flowing stream. Only six inches of fast flowing water will knock you off of your feet.

Two feet of swift moving water will float away most vehicles.

You do not know the road conditions underneath the flood waters, the roadway can



contain

hidden

hazards

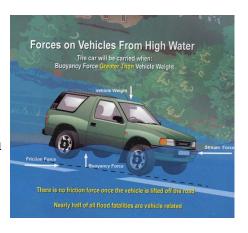
washed

away.

or the

Listen to your local NOAA weather channel for changing conditions.

# Play it safe—Turn Around, Don't Drown!



The Buoyancy Factor

#### Hershey Medical Center program forces doctors to confront worst nightmare, pandemic training

By Nick Malawaskey, Patriot News—From Pennlive.com—3/10/2012

I starts at a fictitious Perry County VA hospital. A patient arrives complaining of flulike symptoms after a trip to Indonesia. Within days, one patient becomes several as the virus begins to slowly, insidiously make its way through the region.

By the time the size of the outbreak becomes apparent, it is essentially too late to stop.

It sounds like the setup for a movie, maybe last year's "Contagion."

Instead, it's a computer-modeled simulation of what could happen if a flu pandemic were to occur in the midstate. Run by Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, the simulator puts doctors on the spot, forcing them to make health care decisions that determine how far the flu spreads.

On Friday, doctors attending a Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians conference in Hershey were run through the wringer.

The computer-driven program uses demographic information and data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to mimic the worst-case scenario of a widespread outbreak of virulent strain of the flu.

It's a health are professional's nightmare.

The doctors were tasked to make decisions on behalf of a hospital in caring for the influx of sick people. The system then takes their decisions, and, based upon its modeling, figures out the out come.

"It's stressful, it's realistic. Kind of scary," said Chris Lupold, a physician in Lancaster, who on Friday was playing the role of a hospital administrator. "These types of scenarios...they're really interesting and really make you think about it."

Set over an eight-week period, the simulation compresses time, bombarding the doctors with information and "news alerts" that occur via loud video updates on wall-mounted televisions.

In some cases, the updates parallel the doctors' decisions. Close schools in the second week and the television anchor appears, announcing the decision.

Or choose not to release the hospital's small stockpile of anti-viral medication to the public and the news anchor pops back up, announcing people are protesting to demand access to the drugs.

The scoreboard is measured in cold, hard numbers.

The number of people infected.

The number of people who have died.

There are no right answers. The system is designed to fail, and fail it does. The only question is how bad it fails, said Nancy Flint, the program's coordinator.

Flint operates the program on behalf of the Hershey Medical Center, which post-Katrina received grant funds to study large -population medical emergencies. What they found wasn't pretty.

Resources quickly run out. Communication quickly breaks down.

For an industry in which money is tight and costs are high, there's little financial sense in stockpiling resources. A normal flu season, even a mild one, can stretch family doctor's practice or even a larger hospital thin.

"Even at a nonpandemic level, we struggle with [resources] daily," Lupold said. "We talk about [preparing for this kind of thing], but implementing it is the hard part."

Continued on next page

This past week I got to spend three days mingling and interacting with some of the leaders in Homeland Security field at the South Central Regional Task Force's yearly Homeland Security Conference held at HACC.

From the private sector, to the military, to other governmental agencies, so much was to be learned and experienced. Lectures ranged from agricultural concerns, to the business industry, physical/police security, and changes coming to the field of Homeland Security—and oh, are those changes coming! The "game" is changing, because the terrorists are changing their tactics.

Expect to see cyber warfare, psychological warfare, and soft targets becoming more popular for attacks... and the attacks being carried out by the different, well known groups to the lone wolf. The tactics you see overseas being done, expect in the next 6-8 years for them to occur here in the US—it's test time overseas right now.

Expect the field to become savvy, creative, lean, and mean because the amount of grant money available has diminished greatly for homeland security initiatives. Areas will become more streamlined and focused back at the community level—a great time to get involved with a local organization or FEMA Corps.

I encourage you all to become more vigilant and more involved, be it at the community/local level or joining a federal team. Post-9/11 complacency has unfortunately set in. It is only a matter of time until another catastrophic event occurs here on our soil and your skills will be needed and resolves will be tested.

Follow trending homeland security and local events on Facebook and Twitter. Make sure you sign up for PSUTXT for campus alerts. Have a family plan in place and additional emergency supplies on hand.

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#### Hershey Medical Center program forces doctors... con't

Flint's department also found that while other emergency officials—firefighters, emergency medical technicians and police—are trained to deal with mass-casualty situations, the health care filed at the micro level isn't.

Hence the training simulator. As the doctors debate hospital staffing and the dispersal of drugs, society around the fictitious medical center begins to breakdown.

The weather causes power outages, state police staffing plummets as officers call in sick, schools close and in Scranton, the "police chief" tells residents, "Not to worry, we still have control of the streets."

The goal is to get the doctors—many of whom are primary family care physicians—talking about how they would react to a mass outbreak.

It's an event that, despite scares, hasn't

really happened in any of their lifetimes. But there are cautionary tales in our history.

In 1918, a strain of the flu killed roughly 3 percent of the world's population. In the 1950's, another strain took the live of roughly 70,000 Americans.

On Friday, Lupold's class did fairly well, considering.

As the simulation rolled on, the number of deaths quickly crossed 1,000, then kept climbing. As communications failed, drug stockpiles dwindled and the hospital ran out of room, the numbers crossed 5,000, then 6,000.

By the end of the eight weeks, 8,000 were estimated dead.

It's a grim number, but it's only a simulation of what could occur if everything goes wrong. The last time a flu pandemic broke out in the United States, H1N1, the result wasn't nearly as catastrophic.

But the training is useful, even if heavy-handed, Flint said.

"It kind of gives you an idea of the impact," she said.

For the doctors, it's also a chance to see the bigger picture.

"These types of things really make you realize how integrated and connected you are," Lupold said.

http://www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2012/03/penn\_state\_milton\_s\_hershey\_me\_8.html