

# New Direction

## **Active Shooter tabletop drill highlights danger of workplace violence**

This week, Memorial's leadership team performed a tabletop emergency preparedness drill, discussing the all too realistic scenario of an active shooter loose in the workplace. Hospital managers and directors were discussing the details of what to do in such a situation at the exact time just such a situation was playing out near a Cincinnati Ohio bank. Three innocents were killed and two injured.

A tabletop drill is designed to facilitate constructive discussion in an informal, stress-free environment, allowing participants to examine procedures and plans and resolve problems identified in those discussions, so the facility can be ready.

"The fact that there was an active shooter situation hitting the news at the same time we were discussing our plans is just validation that everyone, everywhere needs to be prepared at all times," said Jackie Laird, emergency services director for Memorial. In her role as the emergency department director, Jackie is tasked with coordinating emergency preparedness for the hospital. "At the hospital, we practice a couple of times a year so that we will be ready in case of a mass casualty incident, such as a tornado or a bus accident, but we've never practiced for an active shooter. The feeling has always been that we don't want to pretend with an active shooter situation. We wanted everyone to take that seriously, if that alarm was ever triggered. Of course, the possibility that someone could get seriously injured or even killed in that kind of drill also played into the reluctance to simulate a shooting scenario. This is Texas and more than a few people are legally armed or have guns in their vehicles."

Hospital officials, along with experts in the emergency preparedness field, have changed their way of thinking and now believe it's time to start frankly discussing hard choices, face some scary possibilities and make plans to enact more of a functional drill. The next step will be one more tabletop drill, this one city-wide with law enforcement, fire department and Medical Center Hospital. That will be followed eventually by a live action drill involving all of those community partners.

"We had an active shooter false alarm at the hospital recently," noted Jackie. "Though our protocols say our employees are supposed to move away from an active shooter, many of our employees ran towards the situation. Their first instinct was to help or to protect patients. That's a natural inclination for healthcare workers, but it could be deadly in an active shooter situation. It was certainly an eye-opener for us to realize that so many of our staff would run towards danger. That's a choice based on personal convictions, but it needs to be an informed choice. We were already planning this tabletop drill, and now we know that we have to have those frank discussions about what the real life scenario could look like."

There are universal directives in the active shooter policy, like running away from a shooter, reporting the emergency to authorities, hiding in a safe place, locking doors, and fighting, if necessary; but each department is going to have to craft their own unique plans for what to do if an intruder attacks in their area.

"An area with access from multiple public entries has to have a different plan than a unit with key pad entry," explained Jackie. "Of course, that locked unit comes with a caveat: it's imperative for staff to know what they're going to do if the threat comes from within. It begs the question - what will you do if a disgruntled co-worker with a staff badge and total access is the perpetrator? Every department needs to have a plan for their unique area and everyone needs to be aware of that plan, because lack of preparation could mean someone's life."

Each department leader has been tasked with going back to their departments for a refresher discussion with staff, but employees are encouraged to take a proactive stance. Ask for that exchange of information and talk with your coworkers.

Along with those departmental meetings and policy refresher courses, plans are underway for special coverage in the New Direction newsletter. Look for active shooter refresher pointers to be featured regularly in upcoming issues.



## National Rehab Week set for Sept. 17-21

Bomar Rehab is making plans for a week-long National Rehab Week celebration, with a full slate of events including crazy hat and funny sock days, a potluck snack break and a Q&A session. Nacogdoches Major Shelley Brophy will cap off the festivities by declaring Friday, Sept. 21 as Cecil Bomar Rehab Day, kicking off a final flurry of events which will include a Bomar Patient Reunion and the Bomar Olympics.



## HCAHPS Topic 4 – Pain Management

Two questions determine our HCAHPS pain management score.

1) "During this hospital stay, how often did hospital staff talk with you about how much pain you had?" 2) "During this hospital stay, how often did hospital staff talk with you about how to treat your pain?"

Staff members should be addressing question one in hourly rounding as discussed in a previous topic (ask specific questions to anticipate needs: i.e. "Are you in any pain right now?"); but staff members are also required to document pain assessment every four hours at minimum. Any staff member can ask this question, but make sure you relay the answer to the patient care staffer responsible for that patient so they can follow-up.

Most people will jump straight to pain medicine to treat pain, but as healthcare professionals we know there are other things that can be done. How many times have you sat in one position so long that your bottom got sore? Pay attention as you chat around the dinner table, drive, sit at your desk, and watch TV. Notice that if you shift your weight periodically, this releases pressure points, redistributes weight and prevents pain. A patient lying in bed, unable to do this for themselves for some reason, will start hurting and no amount of pain medicine will make it better. That's why turning patients regularly is so important. Just make sure they still have everything in reach when you turn them.

There are a number of different things that can help with pain stemming from other reasons. In addition to medication, offer distraction, decrease stimulation, encourage meditation, etc. Have you ever taken a toddler to get shots or gotten your own flu shot? What do you do? Most people look away and try not to think about it...next thing you know it's over and really didn't hurt that bad. For little ones, you distract and comfort - maybe give them a favorite toy. Soon they have forgotten about the actual shot. These are very simple examples, but the concept can be applied to any situation to help a patient in pain.

Bottom line - talk to your patients; find out what their expectation is for pain relief and work together to find a plan that works for them. As long as they're being asked and are involved in the solution, you will have covered both questions and your patients will be happier.

## NAC HALF rebranded, slated for Nov. 18

Nacogdoches Memorial Foundation has revamped and rebranded the annual race for 2018. "We're excited to partner with a new company for the same great course, same great location, with an all new name," said Katy Crawford, foundation director. "We discovered that our runners were already referring to the East Texas Half Marathon as the Nac Half, so the name change will be an easy and natural transition."

The Nac Half will be held on Sunday, Nov. 18 at 7 a.m. from Blount Park. Along with the 13.1 mile half marathon course, the Nac Half boasts 10K and 5K distances.

This race hosts more than 300 runners each year and we need your help to make it happen. If you would like to gather your coworkers or friends to cheer on the runners, contact Katy Crawford at [crawfork@nacmem.org](mailto:crawfork@nacmem.org) or ext. 4194. If you'd like to sign up for the race, go to the [active.com](http://active.com) website and search Nac Half.



## Healthy Memorial offering employee healthy cooking class at lunchtime

Healthy Memorial will sponsor a special meal prep class for interested employees in the Healthy Memorial Wellness Center at noon on Tuesday, Sept. 25. Lunch will be provided as well as a lesson on how to prep healthy meals in advance of a busy work week. To RSVP for this class, call the community relation department at ext 4124.