

Coordinated Medical Community Response to Support Trainees During Times of Disaster - *Response at ECU Health Medical Center to Treybrooke Apartment Fire*

Mary Catherine Turner, MD; Jennifer B. Stanley, MD
ECU Health Medical Center/ Greenville, North Carolina



Introduction

At the 2023 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) Annual Meeting, Dr. Nasca, President of ACGME, led a workshop titled *Future Disruptions to GME: Foresight and Preparation*. The goal was to brainstorm on possible disruptions to training programs and how to mitigate such disruptions with coordinated GME efforts.

We aim to share effective strategies for supporting our resident and fellow physician trainees (residents) during times of disaster, drawing on examples from an apartment complex fire in May 2023 that destroyed the units of several members of our physician trainees.

ECU Health's response was swift and involved many layers. The response can be grouped into Communication, Financial Response, and Securing Emotional/Mental Health Resources.

Communication by GME

- Within the first hour of notification of a disaster, pull lists of all residents potentially affected.
- Divide names among present office staff to personally contact them to ensure their safety.
- Narrow down the list to those residents directly impacted.
- Determine best means for ongoing communication.
- Ensure program director(s) is aware of the situation and institutional resources available.
- Notify Sponsoring Institution (SI) leadership and medical staff leadership.
- Set intervals for follow up with impacted residents and programs, as well as with institutional leadership.

Financial Response by SI, GME, and Community

- Human Resources to contact affected residents to offer disaster support available to employees.
- Office of GME to provide affected residents with referral form for distribution of emergency funds from an established Emergency Fund set up through the Sponsoring Institution.
- Office of GME to set up a GoFundMe page for the affected residents and cascade through the medical staff leadership's Chief of Staff Message system. Distribute evenly among those residents.
- GME Resident Fellow Council to create a Google Sheet listing needs and listing available donations to allow organic distribution of available items to those in need.

Securing Emotional/Mental Health Resources by SI, GME, and Program(s)

- Provide ready access to free mental health resources through Employee Assistance Program.
- The Office of GME should be prepared to provide emotional support.
- Individual training program leadership should be prepared to provide emotional support.
- Individual training programs should have a backup coverage schedule set to relieve impacted residents from duty until their immediate needs have been met.

Conclusion

Disasters often occur rapidly and without warning. Mobilizing resources across the local medical community in an efficient manner provides critical support to our trainees.

Reflecting upon our experience will help us replicate similar efforts for future disasters, possibly with even faster mobilization of support.



References

<https://www.wnct.com/local-news/greenville/investigation-continues-into-treybrook-apartment-fire/>

Acknowledgments

GME Office Leadership and Staff

GME Resident/Fellow Council

Program Directors, Coordinators, Residents and the entire community who supported our trainees