Hawaii Medical Team Returns from New York

More than 1,200 Served

Medical teams from Hawaii are back from assisting federal medical relief efforts in the wake of superstorm Sandy. Hawaii Disaster Medical Assistance Team (Hawaii DMAT) members combined forces with members of Alaska’s DMAT to form three task forces, and joined with DMAT and national guard members from around the country. Their two-week deployment lasted through Thanksgiving.

Task Force 1, led by HAH Emergency Services Director Toby Clairmont, established a medical surge treatment area adjacent to the hospital Emergency department at South Nassau Communities Hospital. Team members provided care in the emergency department and in a field treatment facility located in the parking lot. The 200-bed+ Level II trauma center is in the disaster area very near heavily damaged areas of Long Beach, Coney Island and Rockaways. Many of the hospitals’ 3,000 staff lost their homes in the storm.

Amy Baker, PharmD, the Adverse Drug Event Project Lead at Mountain Pacific Quality Health, was one of the Hawaii DMAT team members working at the hospital. Amy shared that there were “many DMAT folk from all over the country, pulling together to help those in need.” She felt “honored to be able to sleep in cots next to such great people, and spend Thanksgiving with them. Every day we gave thanks to be able to do this work.”

Hawaii DMAT Task Force 2, led by Bill Richter, Clinical Operations Manager of HAH Emergency Services, joined with the New York National Guard and DMAT teams from Oregon and Colorado on a “Heat and Wellness” mission.

The NY National Guard went from door to door checking to see if people had heat, water, and food. If they ran across someone with medical needs they called on the DMAT members. There were up to three teams, each consisting of a doctor or mid-level provider (PA, APRN), nurse, and paramedic. Sometimes other professionals, such as Hawaii DMAT’s pharmacist, Mark Brown were on the teams. These Heat and Wellness missions covered Coney Island, the Rockaways, Breezy Point, and Staten Island, which were some of the hardest hit areas, and are still ongoing.
Task Force 2 also assumed responsibility for supporting a 120-bed medical shelter at the Brooklyn Armory. Many of the patients were evacuated from nursing homes and required continuous direct care.

What is Hawaii DMAT?

HAH Emergency Services deploys emergency response teams (Hawaii Disaster Medical Assistance Team) for casualty care, aeromedical transport, medical surge and incident management.

Hawaii Disaster Medical Assistance Team (Hawaii DMAT) is a trained corps of medical professionals who respond to calls for medical surge, disaster and humanitarian assistance throughout the U.S. and the Pacific Region. There are currently more than 75 members of Hawaii DMAT. Hawaii DMAT provides on-scene high acuity casualty care services within 2 to 4 hours of request.

Hawaii DMAT is on call for 4 months of the year for response to the U.S. mainland, and 12 months of the year for Hawaii and the Pacific.

Hawaii DMAT is also known as Kalawao Rescue within the State of Hawaii; a nonfederal configuration of the team that provides enhanced services to the State of Hawaii. Kalawao Rescue is administered by HAH Emergency Services and operates year-round.

What is HAH Emergency Services?

HAH Emergency Services, a division of the Healthcare Association of Hawaii, provides emergency preparedness and operations management services to over 115 health care coalition members throughout the state of Hawaii including hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, home care and hospice, air and ground ambulance, blood banks and clinical laboratories.

HAH Emergency Services is one of three federally recognized health care coalitions (along with Indianapolis and DC) that serve as a model for the rest of the nation.

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