



## Statewide Hurricane Drill

**By Allyn Whaley-Martin**

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Since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Louisiana hospitals have worked to prepare for hurricanes and other emergency events in order to better serve and support our communities. This year, Thibodaux Regional Medical Center enhanced its annual hurricane preparedness routine by testing its evacuation procedures as part of the state-wide 2016 Vigilant Guard Exercise.



Left to Right: Chris Boudreaux, Lafourche OHSEP Manager; Kim Beetz, HHS Region ADRC; Pam Roussel, Region 3 GOHSEP Coordinator; Greg Stock, CEO, Thibodaux Regional Medical Center; and Chad Davis, EMS DRC, Acadian Ambulance Service

The Vigilant Guard is an exercise program sponsored by United States Northern Command (US NORTHCOM) and supported by the National Guard Bureau.

This program provides State National Guards an opportunity to improve cooperation and relationships with their regional, civilian, military and federal partners in preparation for emergencies and catastrophic events.

The scenario for the 2016 Vigilant Guard exercise was a natural fit for Louisiana hospital preparedness. The exercise tested how hospitals communicate and coordinate in a hurricane, as well as hospital evacuation plans for both before and after hurricane landfall.

"Thibodaux Regional is committed to the safety of its patients and the region," said Thibodaux Regional Chief Executive Officer Greg Stock.

"As a leader, we work together with other agencies and eagerly participate in drills such as these to continuously seek opportunities to improve and get better."



Beginning on April 11, 2016, hospitals across Louisiana actively engaged in testing information systems processes used during disaster by reporting their available beds and operating status via the MSTAT application. This information is used at the State level to monitor hospital status during a disaster event in order to anticipate resource needs, such as fuel to power a generator. On April 15, 2016, Thibodaux Regional and four other hospitals extended their participation a step further by preparing mock patients for evacuation by helicopter to a staging area at the Naval Station in Belle Chasse,

Louisiana. "Thibodaux Regional is a great partner to work with during these training exercises," says Kim Beetz, DHH Region 3 Administrative Designated Regional Coordinator. "During past storms, Thibodaux Regional has been the only medical center in a five-parish area fully operational to care for patients.

The first step in preparing for the exercise was to identify a location where a military helicopter could land. Military helicopters such as a "Black Hawk" are heavier and require more space for a landing zone than the helicopters which are used for day-to-day patient transports. The hospital staff reviewed disaster plans and were informed of the evacuation plan and how to prepare patients for evacuation. Mock patients were loaded onto stretchers and carefully moved to the helicopter, then flown to the staging point in Belle Chasse. In a real evacuation, patients would be moved to either a hospital within Louisiana or, if an appropriate bed is not available, to a hospital in a neighboring state.



If you'd like to learn more about Thibodaux Regional Medical Center and its participation in this exercise, please contact Toni Martinez ([Toni.Martinez@thibodaux.com](mailto:Toni.Martinez@thibodaux.com)) or Napoleon Ortiz ([Napoleon.Ortiz@thibodaux.com](mailto:Napoleon.Ortiz@thibodaux.com)).

Hurricane Season 2016 will be here soon: Is your hospital ready? Testing plans and practicing response procedures is one way hospitals can prepare to serve patients and communities during real emergency events. In addition, all hospitals should take time to review and update their disaster procedures and plans,

and to confirm contact information for key personnel and vendors.

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Left to Right: Cindy Dolan, CEO, LHA Trust Funds; Glenn Eiserloh, Sr. Risk Consultant, LHA Trust Funds; Greg Stock, CEO, Thibodaux Regional Medical Center; and Mike Walsh, Liability Claims Manager, LHA Trust Funds



### **Podcast - Emergency Preparedness and PHI**

Password: LHATFBR1

This podcast features a 20-minute discussion with leaders in hospital Emergency Preparedness regarding the handling of Protected Health Information (PHI) during disaster situations. Your facility should be prepared to face emergencies, like a hurricane, while keeping the integrity of PHI intact.

## **Questions? Please contact us:**

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