



Mercy Emergency Preparedness Saves Lives

Mercy Hospital staff received extensive training on the use and deployment of the Evacusled™ emergency patient evacuation system in late-November. Shown here, Mercy Hospital staff members maneuver a sample patient down a stairwell, demonstrating the device's ability to turn corners and maintain safety in downward momentum. The devices provide for outstanding care and safety for both patients and staff in the event of an evacuation. In addition to staff, Mercy Hospital hosted a number of Port Huron emergency rescue workers in the use and practice of the state-of-the-art Evacusled™ system.

Continuing its commitment to providing state-of-the-art resources for patients and staff, Mercy Hospital recently held disaster training featuring its new and highly impressive Evacusled™ patient evacuation model.

Relatively new on the emergency preparedness scene for hospitals, Evacusleds™ were recently installed at Mercy Hospital for emergency evacuation of inpatient and non-ambulatory patients.

The patented devices help staff quickly and easily move patients off beds, down hallways and stairwells and out of the building without having to transfer the patient to a wheelchair or gurney.

The Evacusled™, with its distinctive yellow color, is placed directly under the mattress of patient beds and is easily accessible by staff members.

Once deployed, the Evacusled™ cocoons the patient and mattress together along with IVs, oxygen tanks and other life support devices.

In late-November, the Mercy Emergency Preparedness Committee held extensive staff training programs on the implementation and use of the new devices.

“The sled includes 25 wheels on the bottom, and is slid off the bed frame with the patient and mattress,” explains Pam Zauner, Mercy Hospital’s Safety Director. “The entire process takes only moments and the patient remains safe, warm and comfortable.”

The device includes a braking system and uses gravity to help propel the system. It also incorporates built-in protection for the patient’s head and spine during an evacuation.

Through its engineering design, the risk of back injuries for staff is also reduced as patients are pulled — and not lifted — from danger as compared to older methods of evacuation. Because patients remain close to the floor, exposure to smoke and other possible toxins is also minimized.

“Emergency preparedness is extremely important in our area,” continues Pam. “Our community has been designated by the federal government as high-risk for both natural and man-made disaster. Mercy Hospital works extensively with local and regional disaster preparedness programs and hosts or participates in numerous disaster trainings throughout the year.

“The purchase and installation of these patient care and safety devices was the result of extensive research,” Pam explains. “We’ve received federal grant monies to purchase the devices and currently have 40 available for our most frail and ill patients. We hope to purchase more in the near future.”

This new technology has already proven itself to help patients throughout the country. In addition to use during fire, the devices were used in evacuation of Hurricane Katrina-affected hospitals.

“One of the great things about Evacusled™ is how easy it is to use. Although two staff are ideal, this allows us to better utilize our resources because only one staff is needed to prepare a patient for evacuation,” says Pam. “In an emergency situation saving lives matters the most.”