

Huntington Memorial Hospital Set to Double ED Capacity

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The only trauma center in the San Gabriel Valley is fast closing on Phase I of its 4-Phase Emergency Department expansion. The Huntington Memorial Hospital Emer-

gency & Trauma Center, located in Pasadena, California, is also one of the remaining full service emergency departments in the region. In 2010 alone, the hospital, originally built (in the 1970s) to serve 30,000 patients annually, now sees over 61,000 today in the ED. When a

nearby community hospital closed, “Around 14% of their volume came to Huntington Memorial,” says Jeanette Abundis, Executive Director of the hospital’s Emergency & Trauma Services. The expansion portion of the ED should be complete by year-end, with the



Huntington Memorial Hospital Emergency Department Expansion

old section renovation completion scheduled for 2013. At that point, the new ED will be able to handle between 85-90,000 patients annually.

The expanded ED will feature private rooms, whereas the old configuration has a ward concept. Additionally, the current ED has the capability to monitor only 20 acute patients (those requiring medical cardiac monitoring or medical gases), as the overflow area doesn't have the acute services. Explaining why those specialty, high acuity services are needed, Abundis says, "Currently from the ED volume, we account about 63% of the hospital admissions (about 30% of the ED visits)." The hospital is also a base station for Glendale 911 traffic, increasing the odds of receiving high acuity cases.

In design, because the expansion needed to blend with the existing facility, the hospital had to consider infrastructure crossovers. It proved more efficient to expand adjacent to the existing emergency department, which meant relocating a street. "The architect and construction companies saw that it would be better if everything was on the same grade," said Abundis. "Melding a new portion is different than building a completely different structure where you don't have to worry about connecting to existing elements. Instead, there are always those 'A-ha' moments where codes have changed, and things you expect to find simply aren't there!"

The Huntington team conducted site visits to other emergency de-

partments to consider workflow patterns, pod and unit concepts. In the end, they decided on a hybrid. "In California, we need to be able to easily accommodate staffing ratios where you have to continue to adjust ratios according to acuity," explained Abundis. "We decided to go with a goal of 5 operational pods of 10 beds each." The design allowed the department to staff with 4 nurses, yet have the flexibility to address high to low acuity patients.

Being the Valley's only trauma center meant the trauma rooms, ideally kept at one per pod, were outfitted to medically accommodate more than one patient. "We had to consider how to provide care in an unforeseen situation, such as a mass casualty," Abundis said. "Though those (trauma) rooms will be traditionally private, they can be expanded to two beds." Flexibility was key to design elsewhere, as well. "We'll have three triages and build in three observations beds, in the event we have capacity issues. There will be three higher acuity beds behind triage where we can quickly pull patients in and begin standardized procedures."

Then there are the rooms themselves. "The goal was to design universal rooms, where you don't move the patient from one room to another, you bring the care to them," explained Abundis. Utilizing specially created carts that address specific care needs, staff brings the appropriate cart to the rooms. Again, adaptability for best care was at top of mind. "We aimed to streamline productivity

and avoid changing caretakers and starting afresh, which builds in innate delays for care." If the acute care facility backed up after hours, they can shift acuity around, accordingly. Elsewhere, the team designed for the future, with a CT room set for the higher technology machines so specs are met, the design for emergency power in the building and above all, building in the capacity to meet future growth.

Even beyond the ED, the hospital has put the community's care at top of mind. Seeing area residents often use the hospital's ED for non-emergent care needs more suitable to an Urgent Care facility, they helped found Pasadena Community Urgent Care – a joint venture between Huntington Memorial Hospital, Huntington Medical Foundation and the city of Pasadena. This type of focus on efficiency and quality care has garnered recognition nationally, from U.S. News & World Report as a top ten hospital in greater Los Angeles and in receiving a Magnet® designation by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). Huntington Memorial Hospital has laid the foundation to provide the San Gabriel Valley with quality care now and in the future.

For more information on the Huntington Memorial Hospital's Emergency & Trauma Center, contact Andrea Stradling, Public Relations Manager (andrea.stradling@huntingtonhospital.com). For the expansion timeline, visit: <http://www.huntingtonhospital.com/Main/EDExpansionUpdate.aspx>.

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