

U.S. Hospitals Brace For Disasters At Party Conventions



Hospitals in Cleveland, Ohio, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, are on high alert as the two cities host the Republican and Democratic party conventions to choose their presidential candidates.

But the level of preparedness has been overshadowed by a growing concern from random or criminally-intended shootings of civilians and policemen in the largest of U.S. metropolises.

Robert Wyllie, M.D., chief medical operations officer at the Cleveland Clinic in the city where the Republican National Convention (RNC) will be held, said that the hospital is preparing for both outcome extremes, with responses in place for minor concerns like dehydration or exhaustion among delegates to far greater risk concerns such as violent protests or even acts of terror.

Staff at the Cleveland Clinic and other hospitals have been advised to defer vacations, hold off on elective surgeries and stockpile necessary equipment so it can operate for 96 hours without the need to resupply.

Wyllie told [STAT](#) that the recommendation came from the Secret Service, which advised that the hospital be prepared to be able to operate independently for four days.

Further east, in Philadelphia, where the Democratic National Convention (DNC) will take place, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital has been placed on high alert, particularly after the shooting of five police officers during a Dallas protest.

Roger Band, M.D., an associate professor of emergency medicine, summed it up by saying that the threat level, especially during high profile events, is increased.

Wyllie told STAT that Cleveland hospitals are preparing for unrest during the RNC, with the potential to treat both protesters and police requiring advanced planning, while hospitals in Cleveland have been cooperating on potential strategies.

Band said that even large trauma centres in Philadelphia are already stretched to the limit when five or six critically injured patients arrive, and situations like that can quickly overwhelm staffers.

The visit last year by Pope Francis visit helped set precedents in for what works, ABC6 News reported, and road closures and other issues presented by the papal visit are not expected for the DNC.

However, the deadly Amtrak crash in May 2015 near Philadelphia also tested the preparedness of regional healthcare centres, when Temple University Hospital received 54 of the more than 200 casualties of the crash, and had to quickly discharge patients to make room for them.

That was an experience that healthcare officials say do not want repeated and are preparing for all possibilities.

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