



Odessa Hospital Becomes Leading Trauma Center in the Region

ODESSA - West Texas is in a unique position with its growing number of nearly fatal accidents. Whether it's injuries from a vicious battle in the oil fields or a car accident stemming from the increasing population in this liquid gold mine, there are plenty of ways to end up in a trauma care facility.

"Every day our shifts are getting busier and busier. We're seeing more and more patients, more and more trauma," Sudeep Bose, Emergency Medical Physician at Medical Center Hospital, said.

Many times though, centers are not equipped with the resources they need to treat patients in critical condition. As a result, patients have to be transferred over to another hospital, wasting valuable time in the fight for survival.

"Time is very critical in trauma care. You can bleed out in a matter of minutes," Bose said.

But times have changed. In order to improve quality of patient treatment and to meet the needs of the increasing volume of patients, Odessa's Medical Center Hospital spent nearly three years preparing to change their designation level from a level three to a two trauma center.

Officials said the primary difference is that in a level two center, doctors are required to have a shorter response time- less than 30 minutes.

Phyllis Blanco, Director of Trauma Services at the hospital, says they have a team of trauma surgeons that reside inside the hospital. They take 12 hour shifts 24/7, 365 days per year so they can respond to the emergency room within 15 minutes for major trauma.

The hospital had to prepare for the application process to become level two certified. Basically, "you have to work as a level two to earn the level two," Blanco said.

That means they had to buy some fancy medical toys that could help save more lives. For example, the hospital has a CT scanner that can scan the whole body in just a matter of minutes. Additionally, the staff had to be retrained in trauma response.

Now, MCH is the only level two facilities in the Permian Basin and one of 16 level two trauma centers out of the 267 designated facilities in the state. (Texas has trauma designation levels from one to four, with one offering the best treatment.)

Hospital officials are confident that the change will lead to a decrease in the need to transfer patients to other facilities. MCH will be able to treat most people, except for burn victims, who will most likely have to be flown to the Burn Center in Lubbock, and children, who will require specialized treatment elsewhere.

They also project that Odessa will invite patients spanning from larger regions including San Angelo and Abilene. More than anything, Blanco said they're hopeful that improvements in resources and personnel will increase patient survival.

"It gives me more confidence that I have the backup as far as staff and equipment to allow the patient to have the best outcome," Bose said.

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