Planning for Uncertainty: Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Planning

Diagnostic Imaging Experience

Dianna Cody, Ph.D.
Professor
Houston, TX

Hurricane preparation – spooky to see empty grocery aisles…

Hurricane Harvey – August 26, 2017
Super heavy rainfall…

Deep water contained objects not visible…

BEFORE    DURING
BEFORE  DURING

11 Feet of water on this road…
Aftermath – flooded neighborhoods

Worst area ~40% of homes damaged (majority did NOT flood)

Bayou (really big ditch)
4 CT scanners
6 MR scanners
All in trailers hooked to ‘temporary’ building

Road (McGregor)
Holcombe Blvd
Row of trees

MD Anderson – view
From high parking garage
Planning (work)

- Preparation meetings with Radiology administration & leaders
- Frequent weather briefings (listened only to the most optimistic version?)
- Institution determined ‘ride-out’ status (too late as it turned out)
- Planned for daily call-in t-cons to keep everyone up to date
- Those who called in were expected to notify their teams
As Clinical Operations Director, it fell to me to dial in each day
After each t-con, I sent a summary to all department faculty
(This formed the backbone of my daily activities)
Required stable telephone & email connections (lucky)
Usually mid-day, after the institutional emergency committees had met

Daily Quality Control Review
CT, MR (No Nucs – no pharmaceuticals)
Did field one issue of note
CT units fully staffed
MR service a challenge
Not a designated urgent care need
Thus, not staffed when flood waters hit
Techs nearby unable to leave families
No MR service for several days…

Lots of out-of-town patients were stranded nearby.
Many made it to our area for their scheduled exams.
None were turned away…
Workload: mostly in-patients plus a few out-patients

CLOSED Sun Aug 27 through Tues Sept 5.
NINE days! (Mon Sept 4 = Labor Day)
Biggest issues during closure?

- Maintaining security for multiple buildings and entrances
- Convincing faculty & staff NOT to show up to help

Consequences...

One lobby area was flooded (by the time we opened, any damage was invisible)

Soft opening as we ramped up – called in some patients with known serious conditions to get restarted

Super busy for several weeks as rescheduled exams were performed...

Summary - work

- What worked well – planned daily t-cons kept everyone up to date and connected.
- Supervisor on-site joined the daily t-cons. This was CRITICAL.
- Remote access was stable. If computer systems had failed, there would have been much bigger issues...

- What could have gone better – the institution should have initiated ‘ride-out’ teams sooner, when transportation was feasible.
Consequences - regional

- Weird stories – car roofs damaged by boat propellers…
- Some deaths, lots of near misses (Exec Sec Son)
- Some neighborhoods damaged by ‘planned’ water release (grand piano home) as flood gates weakened
- One area was closed to traffic for many months as damn was fortified
- LOTS of stories of strangers helping each other
- Folks with boats chauffeuring folks around (medical)
- Folks delivering free food to those clearing debris
- Furniture store housed many families without homes

$200K goal — $37M

Plan – for me personally

- Husband in town for party (cancelled). He insisted we leave.
- Drove to just south of Dallas. Hotel was full of Houstonites.
- Left our doggie-cam pointed toward front yard to watch for flood waters remotely. VERY helpful, highly recommended!
- Also checked with neighbors to see who was staying put.
- Watched weather channel exclusively for several days…
- Under-current of tension did not allow focus on much else.

Consequences - personally

- No damage to my home (twigs in yard)
- Of 26 faculty, 3 had flood damage at home (12%)
- Several are in process of raising homes now ($)

Next time —
- Also position camera toward back yard. Apparently flood waters were high from that direction as well…
Open Faculty Position – Assistant Professor
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

• Houston, TX
• ENORMOUS equipment base
• Competitive salary
• Excellent benefits
• Ph.D. (D.M.P.)

• Some flexibility –
  – Focus area of interest
  – Keep broad expertise
• X-ray based modalities

• Academic environment
• Imaging Physics Dept. (>100)

Contact: dcdody@mdanderson.org