



Intermountain Healthcare caregivers part of an elite medical team deployed to Houston in the wake of Hurricane Harvey

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SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, USA, September 18, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A year's worth of rain fell in just five days in Houston — and the destruction and flooding in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey left tens of thousands in distress. While most people were looking to escape Houston, 11 Intermountain caregivers headed straight for the eye of the storm as part of an elite medical team deployed to Houston to provide backup medical support for some of the hardest-hit areas.

The Utah Disaster Medical Assistance Team is a group of physicians, nurses, EMTs, and other medical specialists who have agreements with employers, like Intermountain, to help on short-term notice when disaster strikes. The team's 11 Intermountain caregivers were from Intermountain Medical Center, Primary Children's, Life Flight, Utah Valley Hospital, and Orem Community Hospital.

When the team arrived in Houston they set up a field hospital near Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport. A 'field hospital' is a military term used to describe a mobile medical unit near a combat or disaster zone. With Houston now under four feet of water, the team was prepared for the worst, which thankfully never came.

"We were ready for anything," says Scott Gardner, PA-C in Trauma Services at Intermountain Medical Center. "Some of our mission was to be available in 30 minutes to be able to go anywhere to set up a self-supporting medical treatment area. But fortunately for the people of south Texas, we weren't needed for emergencies. It meant the first responders and hospitals were well-prepared and operational."

After spending four days at the field hospital, the team was sent to help staff a clinic at Houston's George Brown Convention Center, where 10,000 evacuees were taking shelter. "Patients were grateful for the help," says Scott. "And despite the disaster everyone seemed to be coping well with the crisis they were going through."

After 10 days, the team flew back to Utah weary but energized by the experience.

"We were all excited to help anyone in any way possible," says Scott. "While we would have liked to have more patient care opportunities, we were happy to be there to help Texans in any way we could. And we're grateful for the support of our families and coworkers for allowing us the opportunity to help others."

As for disasters to come, Scott says they're ready. "We really learned how the system works and I feel better prepared because I have a better idea of what I'll be doing and what I need to do to be helpful when the need arises."

Intermountain Healthcare is a Utah-based, not-for-profit system of 22 hospitals, 180 clinics, a Medical

Group with some 1,500 employed physicians, a health plans division called SelectHealth, and other health services. Helping people live the healthiest lives possible, Intermountain is widely recognized as a leader in transforming healthcare through high quality and sustainable costs. For more information about Intermountain, visit intermountainhealthcare.org.

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