



**Minnesota Hospital Association**

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NEWS RELEASE

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## **Minnesota hospitals coordinate to evacuate, care for at least 106 patients in face of flood**

### ***Record Red River Valley swell affects hospitals from as far away as Minneapolis***

**ST. PAUL** — Minnesota Hospital Association (MHA) member hospitals coordinated to evacuate and care for at least 106 hospital patients from Fargo, N.D.'s MeritCare Health System in the face of record Red River Valley flooding this week.

Many were transferred to neighboring or more distant cities as waters swelled beyond predicted forecasts Thursday night. Exact counts weren't available by today, but most if not all patients were sent from MeritCare and Fargo's Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center.

Across the board, hospitals on dry land were eager to lend a hand, said MHA President Lawrence Massa.

"Minnesota's hospitals are doing a great job helping one another and our friends in North Dakota to avert a patient care disaster from the flooding," he said. "This experience demonstrates how our hospitals are truly dependent on each other and how our health care infrastructure must remain intact despite hardship."

On Friday evening, MeritCare said the following MHA hospitals had received evacuated patients:

- Abbott Northwestern Hospital, Minneapolis: 43
- Children's Hospitals & Clinics of Minnesota, St. Paul: 7
- Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare, St. Paul: 1
- Hennepin County Medical Center, Minneapolis: 5
- Lake Region Hospital, Fergus Falls: 2

- Mayo, Rochester: 1
- MeritCare Thief River Falls Northwest Medical Center: 1
- North Country Health Services, Bemidji: 4
- North Memorial Medical Center, Robbinsdale: 2
- Perham Memorial Hospital: 1
- Sanford Health, Sioux Falls, S.D.: 4
- St. Cloud Hospital: 35

At least four long-term care facilities also relocated residents to hospitals. For example, Eventide Senior Living Community in Moorhead relocated 30 residents to St. Joseph's Medical Center in Brainerd. St. Joseph's worked with the Central Minnesota Hospital Response Team to coordinate the issue.

MeritCare also sent an additional 71 patients to facilities in other states. The process didn't present any major difficulties, said MeritCare's Angela Novak, marketing manager who operated as the public information officer.

"It's gone very well," she said. "We're quite pleased."

In addition, the Fargo VA transferred a number of patients in the last day or so to other VA hospitals in several states. The hospital began relocating patients on Tuesday. The total number of patients transferred was not available Friday evening.

Maria Briggs, acting public affairs officer, said the VA facility has emphasized communicating with patients' loved ones during the relocation.

"We've constantly called the patients' families to ask them where they wanted them to go," she said. "We've had no issues whatsoever with people being upset or anything."

"It worked out this time," Briggs added. "If only the river will stop rising, we'll be in great shape."

The Minnesota Department of Health is coordinating many of the emergency response efforts related to health care. The State Emergency Operations Center at the Minnesota Department of Public Safety has been activated since Wednesday morning. Representatives from more than 25 agencies are on hand to help coordinate flood response efforts.

For information about patients who were transferred because of the flood, visit MeritCare's Web site here: [www.meritcare.com/About/MeritCareFeatures/View\\_Article.aspx?id=48](http://www.meritcare.com/About/MeritCareFeatures/View_Article.aspx?id=48). For updates, news releases and other flood information, visit [www.minnesotarecovers.org](http://www.minnesotarecovers.org).