

The Joplin Tornado A Long Term Care Perspective



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The Joplin Tornado The Long Term Care (LTC) Perspective

Outline of Presentation

- Impact to LTC Facilities - Who was there, who was hit, casualties, damage, etc.
- Notification/Protection - Warning systems and measures taken for protection.
- Evacuation - Medical response for injured and transfer or evacuation of other residents to operating LTC facilities.
- Communication - Interaction immediately following the storm with emergency providers and disaster recovery authorities.
- Regulation - Interaction with and follow on assistance provided by our governing authorities the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services, Section for LTC Regulation (DHSS/SLTCR).
- Association - Support from the long term care profession and MHCA.
- Recovery - Status Update
- Lessons Learned

Impact to Joplin LTC Facilities

Six (6) Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) in Joplin.

- 3 SNFs sustained minor damage, power outages, etc.
- 3 SNFs were completely destroyed.
 - **The Greenbriar** was impacted the most with a direct hit.
 - 14 Residents and 1 Employee died during the storm.
 - Not all residents could be moved from their rooms, evacuation areas hit.
 - Keith Robinson, CNA, died shielding two residents who also perished.
 - 7 residents have since passed away, some due to injuries or trauma of the day.
- The other facilities destroyed were the **Meadows Care Center** and **Joplin Healthcare Center**. While no deaths or major injuries, they required complete evacuations under tremendously trying circumstances.
- Of the 3 SNFs destroyed, there were 332 licensed beds and census that day of 265. Thus, 251 residents required permanent relocation to other facilities.

Impact to Joplin LTC Facilities

Some examples of the devastation at **The Greenbriar**



Impact to Joplin LTC Facilities

Six (6) Residential Care (RCF) or Assisted Living Facilities (ALF) were located in Joplin (4 RCF & 2 ALF).

- Of the RCFs, 1 was destroyed (**Love & Care**). They had 28 licensed beds and a census of 17 at the time of the tornado. All residents were relocated.
- The ALFs suffered only minor damage.



Notification & Protection - Joplin LTC Facilities

Notification

- Generally speaking there was notice of the storm warning from media, sirens, etc. but minimal time to begin thorough emergency procedures.
- Alarms were sounded in the facilities and measures taken for protection.

Protection

- Facilities had a short amount of time to put storm procedures and emergency planning into to place.
- Most managed well and were able to move residents to safer parts of the structures or defend in place in accordance with previously set procedures.
- Any transfer of the elderly and frail is traumatic.
- Joplin Globe cursory coverage well after the fact with a story on **The Greenbriar** which included recommending basements in all facilities illustrated a complete lack of understanding of our type of facility, function, finances and inability to evacuate quickly, not to mention regulator and customer demands for homelike living.

Evacuation – Joplin LTC Facilities

Evacuations

- In our view, best area of Community & LTC Response.
- EMS Response was solid for how busy they were. Greenbriar proximity to St. John's and impact area brought targeted response. Community assistance helped evacs.
- Freeman and St. John's were great to our injured.
- Triage at LTC facilities. Safeguard, evacuate and transfer to other locations.

Transfers

- Relocations and Resident Transfers went amazingly well.
- Great response within LTC Community.
- Both highly impacted facilities were luckily part of a regional multi-facility company and a national multi facility company with other facilities in the area, region and even Joplin, so transfer began immediately.
- SNF near Joplin (Seneca House) saved displaced RCF Residents from Love & Care after a night in a van and church basement to and from Oklahoma.

Communication – Joplin LTC Facilities

Internal

- Facility Based systems worked prior to storm.
- Level of destruction meant no use after.
- Facilities reached out to corporate entities and neighboring facilities. Local and regional company infrastructure assisted greatly.
- Less need for staff or supplies than most might think due to facility destruction and evacuation.
- Identifications of dead, missing and live evacuees from The Greenbriar and its Alzheimer's care unit a challenge in some cases. Family contacts difficult but managed and made as day(s) progressed.
- Resident ID, Medicare & Medicaid Files, RX Info, Care Plans, etc. can be greatly enhanced in future through EMR or offsite data storage. If cost prohibitive, even an emergency flash drive with basic data and a photo can be taken during evacuation by NHA & DON.

Communication – Joplin LTC Facilities

External – Disaster Response Authorities & Community

- LTC is used to being the "forgotten family member" of healthcare.
- Emergency operations, basic contact data and procedures kept by state is lacking.
- Major LTC leaders are either unaware and/or doubtful if we are actually priority facilities and if correct contact data, operational plans and GIS info exists for LTC.
- Local and state agencies should do a self audit of this area and include our facilities.
- DHSS/Section for LTC Regulation (SLTCR) did so much well but works under other state entities. Their hospital division response shows a response inequity.
- Facilities are accustomed to a later priority and adapted. They contacted the state and or were eventually contacted by them.

Communication – Joplin LTC Facilities

External – Media

- Death toll, devastation in impact area and at St. John's & Joplin High School kept media from focusing on LTC impact, which was fine with us.
- St. John's response was excellent. All LTC facilities would love to emulate it.
- The Greenbriar owners commented when contacted and after initial recovery operations were complete.
- Biggest challenge was relaying to media that we could not give them final notice of those who left deceased or died later. This was due in large part to the complications of the mortuary operation.

Regulation – Joplin LTC Facilities

Regulatory Authority –

All licensed Missouri LTC facilities (SNF, ALF & RCF) are regulated by the Department of Health & Senior Services (DHSS), Section for Long Term Care Regulation (SLTCR).

Official Responses & Action –

- SLTCR – Upon notification of the tomado, they contacted their Springfield office, also under a tornado warning. They made basic attempts to contact facilities by phone and a Joplin area staffer began driving the impact area. All 12 licensed facilities were contacted by late on Day 2.
- SLTCR – Provided solid local and Jefferson City response on evacuations, finding residents scattered in three states and working with facilities when needed on placements (i.e. Love & Care case) and accounting for missing and dead.
- SLTCR – Provided excellent response on working with facilities to obtain waivers for new admissions, CMS liaison work, Medicaid and Medicare billing issues. Lately, they are assisting with licensing and Certificate of Need issues for rebuilding.

Association Support – Joplin LTC Facilities

LTC Profession –

Excellent support of fellow LTC facilities in smooth transfers, relocations and receipt of evacuees.

Trade Association –

- Implemented our Emergency Support Plan to visit and assist facilities, conduct crisis media operations and assist with evacuations and state regulatory support and liaison.
- Received excellent support through our national association, the American Health Care Association (AHCA), and fellow state affiliates from Alabama & Florida.
- Immediately created a Joplin Tomado Relief Fund to assist employees impacted by the tragedy and resident programs or property where we could have an impact or no family was there for them. Raised and delivered over \$130K to impacted members.
- Conducted a memorial at our annual convention, continue our government affairs and regulatory support during recovery and rebuilding.

Recovery Status – Joplin LTC Facilities

Destroyed Facilities Update -

- 3 SNFs will likely be rebuilt or at least 2 with one larger facility. All deemed total loss.
- RCF will remain closed.
- Assistance from state at the Health Facilities Review Committee (HFRC) for Certificate of Need (CON) process is helpful to hospital and LTC facilities. Neighborhood is also devastated, so state allowances on location within radius will be helpful.

Employee Impact -

- Devastating. From one death to many family members injuries or loss of life, personal injury, PTSD, home loss, job loss, job relocation and loss of residents they cared for. This will take time and there will always be a lasting impact on our LTC employees.

LTC Profession Impact -

- Also a lasting impact. Committees, task forces, seminars and lessons learned helpful. More awareness and concern for future planning for storms, changes, etc.

Lessons Learned – Joplin LTC Facilities

Communication

- Improve or Create a Basic Resident Identification, Personal & Medical Information & Photo Identification System.
This does not mean mandating EMR/HIT for a SNF. However, a basic ID and Information file or system (even in MS Word) can provide the picture, biographical and medical information needed in a disaster. Flash Drive, off-site storage means it can survive and be used ASAP.

Emergency Operations & Response

- Review/Audit Disaster Response Procedures.
Check facility contact information, priority facility designations and follow through. SEMA, DHSS & LTC Facilities should self audit and then come together to see where they really are now or were during the Joplin Tornado.
- Correlate Regulatory Agency Assistance (DHSS/SLTCR) Success After Event to Immediate Emergency Response.
SLTCR was right there moving forward on key issue and removing barriers. Can we bring that same success to overall operational picture (SEMA, Locals, DHSS Regional Office)?
- Evacuation Plans & Transfers Worked Very Well. Continue to improve them.