Rio Grande Valley EMS
Response to CoVID-19

Daniel Ramirez EMT-P

Director of Communications, Deputy EMC,
TX EMTF Task Force Leader for EMS response to CoVID-19

City of Pharr, Texas
Where is the Rio Grande Valley?

Deep South Texas
- 4 Counties
- 47 Cities
- Population of 1.3 Million

EMS
- Private for Profit 9-1-1
- Fire Based
- 3rd City Service
- Private non for profit 9-1-1
- Hospital Based 9-1-1
- Private –non 9-1-1

Approx. 5,922 Sq. Miles
**Timeline**

- 1st case March 21st, 2020
- Beginning of surge mid June
- Request for State Assistance late June
- 1st State assets in theater June 28th, 2020
- 5 - TX Emergency Medical Task Force Ambulance Strike Teams deployed from June 28th – July 29th, 2020
- 10 – FEMA Ambulance Strike Teams deployed July 25th – currently in theater

**Challenges**

- Positive cases among EMS personnel
  - Quarantine Procedure different at every agency
  - 1 LODD (Weslaco Fire EMS Driver Paramedic Jesse De La Rosa)
- Loss of personnel to private contractors
  - Multi job medic = double loss
  - Some agencies reporting 65% staff reduction, a combination of positive cases and loss of staff to contractors
- Extremely long wait times at the ER
  - Every Facility on Diversion
  - EMS units waiting with patients 8-12 hours
- Increased response time to 9-1-1 calls
- Personal Protective Equipment
  - Initial shortage
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### Solutions

- Communication among all providers to help each other when and wherever needed.
- Regional Advisory Council involvement
  - EMS calls to discuss needs
  - Discussion – on regional protocol to transport only if needed
- Early involvement of the Rio Grande Valley Healthcare Preparedness Coalition
  - Daily calls to determine hospital capacity
  - Ventilator need
  - Supplied PPE provided by Texas Division of Emergency Management
- State of Texas Assistance Request for Ambulance Strike Teams

### TX EMTF / FEMA Response

- Support 9-1-1 providers
- Decompress hospitals
- Support Alternative Care Sites
- Movement of critical patients due to oxygen failure at hospitals
Rio Grande Valley EMS Response to CoVID-19
BUT WAIT THERE IS MORE!!

TXEMTF / FEMA Response

• Support 9-1-1 providers
• Decompress hospital pre landfall
• Support Alternative Care Sites

• To Date EMS Responses
  • TXEMTF – 2,193
  • FEMA – 2,749

• 5 deployed EMS personnel tested positive and have since been and RTW

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

• 214,957 people tested
• 42,384 positive cases
• 1,474 fatalities
• 1st child fatality on 8/15/2020
Questions?