Improving Emergency Medical Care for Patients in Qatar: UPMC Partners with Hamad Medical Corporation to Establish a Trauma Center of Excellence
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The Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), Qatar’s principal public health system, partnered with UPMC to improve the quality of emergency medical care in the country. With full support from the Emir and Ministry of Health, the partnership focused on creating a comprehensive and integrated emergency department and trauma service.

Together, the teams worked side-by-side to develop and execute plans to enhance every aspect of HMC’s emergency care, culminating in the establishment of a Level 1 trauma center. The partnership also resulted in the creation of an integrated medical records and documentation system, development of new operational and managerial protocols and establishment of critical education programs.

Today, HMC provides emergency medical care to more than 700,000 patients annually, helping Qatar to set the bar for emergency care throughout the entire Middle East.
Qatar, a small independent state located in the northeast corner of the Arabian Peninsula is home to more than 1.8 million people. Small but quickly growing, its population has more than tripled in the past decade, attracting expatriates from a range of countries. The country has also grown economically, today boasting one of the highest per capita incomes in the world.

Before the partnership, HMC’s primary hospital — Hamad General Hospital — had earmarked 148 beds for emergency care, but was processing 900 to 1,200 trauma patients a day. While the hospital — along with others in the area — was modern and functionally sound, leadership understood that there was work to be done to expand access, increase efficiency and establish world-class emergency care.

Noting UPMC’s clinical, technical and managerial expertise, HMC enlisted its services to help create and implement a comprehensive, integrated and data-driven emergency care system. With full support from government and hospital leaders, the two organizations entered into a partnership to create a trauma center at Hamad General Hospital. The ultimate goals were to improve clinical outcomes and achieve accreditation as a Level 1 trauma center — the highest level according to American College of Surgeons criteria, capable of providing total care for every aspect of injury, from prevention to rehabilitation.

“We wanted to create one of the world’s leading trauma centers at Hamad General Hospital, with the best possible care for our patients and the finest training for our physicians,” said Dr. Hanan Al Kuwari, managing director of HMC. “We felt that our collaboration with UPMC would help ensure that we reached our goal as quickly as possible.”
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Dr. Hanan Al Kuwari, HMC Managing Director
A FULL PARTNERSHIP: MOVING FROM PLANNING, TO EXECUTION, TO EXCELLENCE

As a first step, UPMC conducted a comprehensive assessment of HMC’s emergency care processes at five participating hospitals and emergency departments: Hamad General Hospital, Al Khor Northern Area Hospital, Women’s Hospital, Al Sadd Pediatric Emergency Center and Hamad’s Emergency Medical Services — all chosen for their high volume of trauma patients. The UPMC team immersed itself in the health system for a year, working side-by-side with HMC to observe care administration, interview care providers and provide side-by-side clinical care.

The assessments informed the development of a set of performance objectives and a comprehensive action plan. The plan included nearly 350 recommendations, covering 10 emergency medical system components and providing specific deliverables and timelines.

With a plan in place, UPMC established an on-the-ground presence, providing education, training and other services to Qatar’s emergency medical system. Additionally, UPMC identified and helped to hire top-quality medical staff, emergency medical service providers, nurses, administrators and many other key positions in the health system.

“We don’t believe in handing our partners a plan and getting on a plane. We like to be on the ground, working side-by-side with our partners,” said Dr. Walt Stoy, executive director of the emergency medicine enhancement project. “We stay to see our collaborations through. That’s really our point of differentiation.”

Establishing Hamad General Hospital as a verifiable Level 1 trauma center allowed patients with multi-system injuries to be immediately admitted and treated by teams of surgeons specializing in trauma medicine. UPMC and HMC also created an advanced communication system between paramedics at the scene of a trauma incident and the hospital’s doctors, helping to activate medical teams before a patient reaches the hospital. Furthermore, teams established a trauma registry to track and improve patient outcomes, research programs, quality improvement processes and other factors necessary to achieve Level 1 status.

Finally, UPMC orchestrated a complete transfer of knowledge that enabled HMC to continue to run the emergency medical system efficiently and independently.
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Dr. Walt Stoy, Executive Director of the Emergency Medicine Enhancement Project
“By collaborating and working closely together over the long-term, we developed a world-class health center with quality patient care that serves as a shining star for health care in the Middle East.”

Dr. Alan Hodgdon, Executive Medical Director of the HMC-UPMC Emergency Enhancement Project
HMC AND UPMC: MEETING ALL THE REQUIREMENTS TO ACHIEVE LEVEL 1 TRAUMA CARE

Among other things, the UPMC-HMC partnership resulted in:

- Enhancement of every aspect of Qatar’s emergency care — including clinical care, research, pharmacy services, laboratory testing and radiology
- Creation of an integrated medical records and documentation system
- Ongoing education and training programs in medical care, customer service, management and communication
- Development of new operational and managerial protocols
- A performance management system to ensure accountability, responsibility and continuous improvement
Perhaps most importantly, the collaboration resulted in reduced patient length of stays, better bed utilization, significant cost savings and the measurable improvement of overall patient care. All of these initiatives were completed within budget parameters established at the outset of the project.

“With our concentrated focus on treating the complex injuries of trauma patients, we have been able to improve our emergency care capabilities, as well as provide education and training for our surgeons, helping us save more lives,” said Dr. Kimball I. Maull, MD, FACS, Head - Section of Trauma Surgery, Department of Surgery, Hamad General Hospital.

“Qatar was seeing its skyline evolve daily, and we wanted to help ensure that its health care system evolved along with the population and technology growth,” said Dr. Alan Hodgdon, executive medical director of HMC-UPMC emergency enhancement project. “By collaborating and working closely together over the long-term, we developed a world-class health center with quality patient care that serves as a shining star for health care in the Middle East.”
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ABOUT UPMC

UPMC’s objective is to share our clinical, technological and managerial knowledge and expertise with partners around the world, customizing solutions so that patients and regions benefit and thrive. We believe everyone should have access to the best possible care, without having to leave their country or region.

About Us

UPMC, an academic medical center affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh, is a recognized leader in providing health care services in the United States and internationally.

Through UPMC International Services, we are able to offer a full range of health consulting services. By collaborating with UPMC, our multi-disciplinary team can provide customized solutions, on-the-ground support and direct access to deep clinical expertise and operational knowledge.

Our goal is to work side-by-side with our partners from start to finish, until we both agree that the work is done. We can assess needs, build the right hospital and infrastructure, provide education and design customized clinical programs. We can also work with our partners’ doctors and staff to ensure that entire team understands their roles in building and maintaining an excellent health care system.

By working with UPMC to identify and implement customized solutions, our partners’ give patients in their area access to the best possible health care, become a magnet for patients from other regions and support growth of their local economies.

You can learn more about the services we offer here: www.UPMCInternational.com.
FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

UPMC International Services
UPMCInternational@upmc.edu
+1-412-647-7114
www.UPMCInternational.com