

# History of the Oregon Trauma System

The Oregon Trauma System began in 1982, when Daniel K. Lowe, MD., and his colleagues conducted a non-autopsy retrospective analysis of 762 severely injured patients admitted to 23 hospitals in a six-county area, including Portland and the surrounding rural areas. The patients had been taken to the nearest hospital to where the injury occurred, without regard to the hospital's special capabilities. Hospitals then had not been designated or categorized as trauma centers. Twenty five percent of the fatalities and sixteen percent of all outcomes were considered "inappropriate" for the severity of injury incurred. Furthermore, they demonstrated that the average time required for a surgeon to respond to an injured patient was greater than one hour.

In 1983, state Senators Steve Starkovich and John Kitzhaber M.D., introduced Senate Joint Resolution 23, which authorized Oregon Health Services (OHS) to develop a plan for a statewide trauma system.

The following year, the Oregon trauma Plan was completed. The plan included standards and pre-established protocols for prehospital trauma care, trauma center triage, trauma center designation, system-wide quality assurance, research and injury prevention.

In 1985, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 147, which provided the authority for the creation of a statewide trauma system. In September of that year, Gov. Victor Atiyeh signed this bill, making Oregon one of the few states in the nation to approach trauma care in a systematic manner.

Today, Oregon is recognized throughout the nation as a leader in trauma systems development. It was the first state to develop a system that included small rural hospitals as well as large urban facilities and that was voluntarily entered into by the hospitals. The Oregon Trauma System also includes a volunteer Area Trauma Advisory Board in seven regions that plan, implement and monitor system activities.

## **Facts about the Oregon Trauma System**

- Since its inception, 133,859 trauma patients have been treated within the Oregon Trauma System, and 21,474 patients have been transferred within the system to a higher level of care.
- Forty-four hospitals throughout Oregon participate in the trauma system.
- The trauma system includes six hospitals outside of Oregon- four in Washington, one in Idaho and one in California.
- Trauma patients are transported by 169 EMS agencies within the trauma system.
- When the Oregon Trauma System began in 1989, approximately 3,900 patients were treated that year. By 2007, the number of patients treated had grown to 11,000.
- In 1991, approximately 300 patients were transferred in the Oregon Trauma System. By 2007, the number of transfers increased to more than 2,000.

## **A few facts about injury prevention**

- The unintentional death rate for Oregon children ages 0-14 has dropped 54 percent since 1996.
- An Allstate Insurance study ranked the Portland metropolitan area as one of the top 10 safest places for teenage drivers.
- Oregon is a leader in the nation for passing safety legislation, including primary safety belt use; motorcycle helmet use; bike, skateboard, roller blade and scooter helmet use for children under 16; graduated licensing laws for teens; and child safety seats and booster seat use.

*An excerpt from the Oregon Trauma System celebration dinner pamphlet.*