



Three Questions for Evan Gibson, M3

My Night in the ED: Treating My Community During a Mass Casualty Incident

Evan Gibson is a third-year medical student at the MCW-Milwaukee campus. He was working a shift in the ED the night of the Waukesha Parade incident when Froedtert Hospital and Children's Wisconsin-Milwaukee Hospital ran a mass casualty incident. Here he answers three questions on his experience working a mass casualty event as a medical student...

Transformational Times: What emotions did you experience hearing about the incident/treating the patients?

Fear was the first emotion that I experienced, which surprised me as I worked in EMS for multiple years and experienced challenging situations. I think that framed the seriousness of the incident for me. I have fortunately never been a part of a mass casualty incident and wasn't sure what experiences were going to come in the following hours.

As I'm from Southeastern Wisconsin, I was also fearful that I might know a patient that came in. There is quite a difference between a friend texting you to ask what they should take for their cold vs. treating them (or their family) for a life-threatening injury.

Transformational Times: How did you harness your fear in the moment? What advice did you receive from fellow students or physicians prior to the arrival of the patients?

Fortunately, Dr. Jason Liu, who is an expert in Disaster Management, came to the ED after hearing of the event and helped lead the response. He reminded us that "the pathology is the same", and this was a calming message for me. It reminded me that these individuals would be no different than the previous patients that have presented to the trauma bay and helped ground me.

Transformational Times: Did you notice any characteristics or traits that the Froedtert Hospital/Children's Wisconsin-Milwaukee Hospital workforce demonstrated that stood out to you?

The dedication of everyone stood out most to me. There were multiple nurses, techs, and physicians that came to the ED or called in asking how they could help even though they were not scheduled.

Everyone wanted to help their community in any way they could. The swiftness and preparedness of the nursing staff stood out to me as well. They quickly moved patients to the floor and made sure that there were plenty of rooms available within the ED. Everyone appeared prepared and eager to run a smooth mass casualty incident.