

Barton may have trauma designation this week

Updated Jan. 27 3:25pm: Barton received the trauma designation from the Board of Supervisors.

By Kathryn Reed

In a matter of hours Barton Memorial Hospital is likely to become the only trauma center in the Lake Tahoe Basin. The final hurdle is for approval from the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors.

The electeds on Jan. 27 are expected to sign the paperwork to make this a reality. The board is being asked to certify the designation.

“Barton’s goal is to provide high quality and appropriate care for our patients around the clock with compassion and expertise. Trauma III designation means we can help patients receive the best care and treatment available,” surgeon Kim Evans told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Barton originally had hoped to be a trauma hospital two years ago. The amount of paperwork and hoops to jump through forced the delay. The American College of Surgeons’ Committee on Trauma has 160 items a level three center must meet. Barton has done so and passed the verification visit on the first try.

“We have a very active population and a high volume of visitors year-round, which means our potential needs for trauma patients is greater than our population indicates. This also shows in our patient data – approximately 30 percent of our emergency visits are trauma-related,” Evans said.

There are 51 trauma centers in California, with Barton being

one of four level three facilities verified by ACS.

“Trauma III designation recognizes Barton Hospital as a critical access point for patients seeking trauma care. Unlike other hospital facilities, trauma centers guarantee the resources for in-depth emergency care and the immediate availability of emergency medicine physicians, surgeons, nurses, lab and X-ray technicians, and life support equipment 24-hours a day,” Evans explained.

Renown Medical Center in Reno is a level two facility, while UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento is a level one. These levels are usually found in urban centers.

Barton has been operating as though it’s a trauma center. So it is not like there will be immediate, dramatic changes. The additional staff required for a level three has been hired, including a trauma program coordinator.

“In the long run, the care may be less expensive for patients. A patient may avoid being transferred to another trauma center and the patient’s treatment plan includes follow-up and injury prevention program,” Cate Neal, registered nurse and trauma program coordinator, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

However, added costs are possible from Barton.

“An activation fee is only implemented if the patient meets the trauma activation criteria for a full or modified trauma,” Evans said. “This fee covers the additional cost of care including staff and equipment implemented to help someone with a life-threatening injury.”

A major difference with being a trauma center would be the coordinated care approach. The team concept starts when a person is admitted and then all the way through rehab. Patients are also likely to see more in-depth care and have it administered faster.

“Injury prevention programs will be incorporated into a patient’s treatment plan, depending on the injury. Examples of programs include concussion awareness, alcohol prevention outreach, and physical therapy,” Neal said.

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Notes:

- The Board of Supervisors meeting is Jan. 27 starting at 9am in Placerville.