

SLT hospital retains trauma center designation

By Cate Neal

Barton Memorial Hospital is one of four designated Level III trauma centers in California, and the only trauma center in the Lake Tahoe, Truckee, and Carson Valley regions.

Recently, Barton Hospital was recertified as a Level III trauma center.

Below are six ways this designation strengthens health care in South Tahoe.

1. Trauma care starts when the paramedics arrive. Unlike other hospital facilities, trauma team members (emergency medicine physicians, surgeons, nurses, and lab and X-ray technicians) and facilities (operating rooms and life support equipment) are available 24-hours a day.
2. A trauma center guarantees a team approach to trauma. The trauma team can quickly move a patient through diagnosis and treatment. Personnel work together from arrival through rehabilitation and discharge.
3. Thirty percent of Barton's emergency visits are trauma-related, illustrating a high community need for trauma services.
4. Injury prevention programs are incorporated into a trauma patient's treatment plan. Examples: concussion awareness, alcohol prevention outreach, and physical therapy.
5. A trauma center can help reduce life-threatening incidents. Tools like a personalized follow-up plan and community outreach can decrease the number of injuries.

6. Trauma designation is a choice; the hospital must seek it out and earn it. Verified Level III trauma centers meet more than 160 specific criteria established by the American College of Surgeons and Committee on Trauma. Designations require verification visits, education requirements, and a certification procedure.

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