



If ever disaster strikes, the FIU-Florida Advanced Surgical Transport (FIU-FAST) team is trained, ready and equipped to treat and evacuate critical care patients.

Today the all-volunteer team officially joined the FIU family through a partnership with the **Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine** and FIU's Department of Emergency Management. This team of highly trained medical professionals and support staff will now have access to the expertise of medical faculty, health professionals, and additional resources to help serve the community. The only civilian team of its kind in the nation, the FIU-FAST team can supplement local hospital critical care and ICU capabilities following a terrorist attack, natural disaster, or other major incident.

"FIU is a solutions center for our community and today we are augmenting our reach by welcoming FAST into the FIU family," said FIU President Mark B. Rosenberg.

At a training exercise at FIU's Modesto A. Maidique Campus today, the team demonstrated its capabilities of working with local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and local hospitals to air transport critical care patients from a disaster scene. Multiple patients, human and manikin, were stabilized and transported aboard medical evacuation helicopters.

"At FIU we have been looking for the best way to utilize our medical faculty and the university's capacity to assist during a local, state, or even an international disaster," said John A. Rock, M.D., founding dean of the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine and FIU senior vice president of health affairs. "We were impressed by the capabilities of the FAST team and knew we wanted to join forces so that together we can do even greater good."



The original team, founded in 2007, is led by Steve Williams and staffed by nearly 100 volunteer health professionals including trauma surgeons, critical care doctors, nurses and other support personnel.

“We are pleased to join the FIU family and make our team the model for other universities and states around the country,” Williams said. “FIU’s community support and impressive faculty and medical education will truly strengthen the team’s preparedness and effectiveness.”

The FIU-FAST team has the ability and training to set up a ten-bed intensive care unit to perform life-saving surgical procedures and critical care, as well as transport critical care patients to and from hospitals in civilian or military planes.

“The team has the unique ability to deploy very quickly — fittingly, it’s called FAST,” said Ruben Almaguer, assistant vice president, Disaster Management & Emergency Operations at FIU. “All our equipment is prepackaged and centrally located, ready to deploy at a moment’s notice.”

The new partnership will help expand the original team’s resources, provide additional training opportunities and help recruit new members. FIU medical and nursing students will be able to train so they can graduate with the necessary certifications to be part of the team. The new FIU-FAST team is supported by community partners that include **Baptist Health South Florida**, the **Batchelor Foundation**, **Florida Blue**, **Leon Medical Centers**, and **Nicklaus Children’s Hospital**.

<https://news.fiu.edu/2016/04/florida-advanced-surgical-transport-team-joins-fiu-trains-with-local-hospitals-to-treat-critical-care-patients/99884>