

# A Tale of Two Twisters

Smithville, MS



National Association of Community Health Centers  
Emergency Management Webinar

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A deadly EF-5 tornado touched down at the south end of Smithville, MS (Pop.850)



The tornado traveled northward on Hwy. 25 leaving a half-mile path of carnage and destruction. In less than 30 seconds Smithville was GONE...



16 Killed  
80 – 100 Injured



## 127 Homes



Completely Destroyed

## 60 Homes with Major Damage

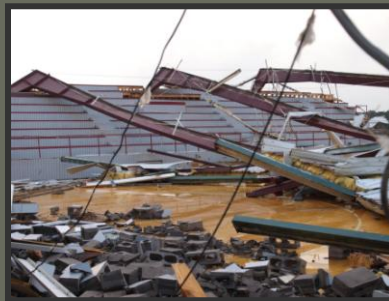


Over 100 more affected

## 19 of 20 businesses were destroyed



## Town Hall, Post Office, Bank & School



## Four of Five Churches – Gone!



## Our new reality...Curfew, command, rescue, recovery



## Smithville Medical Clinic (Before)

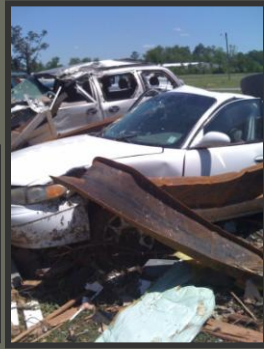


## Smithville Medical Clinic (After)

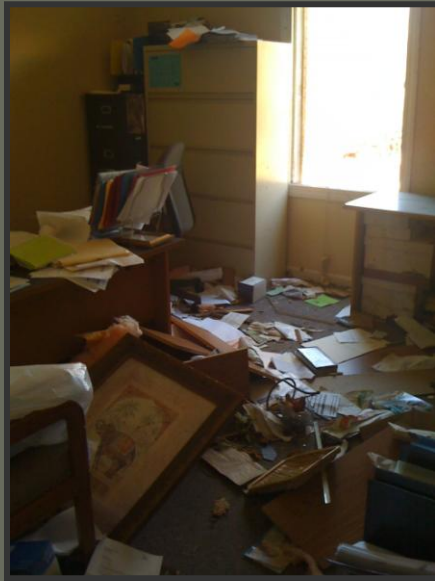
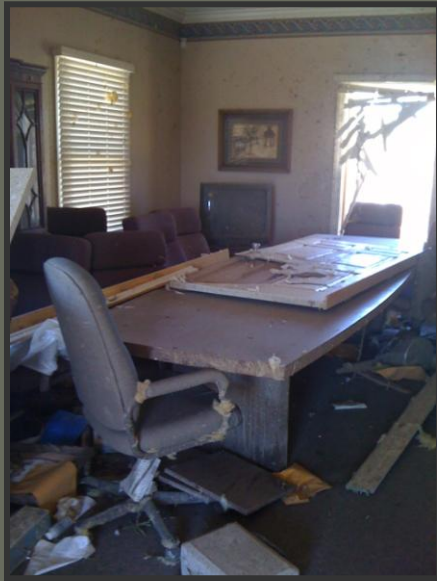


Approximately 30 people (staff, patients, couriers, and drug reps) were in Access facilities when the tornado hit and there were no injuries

## Employee Parking



## Clinic Interior (After)



## Access Family Dental (Before & After)



## Administrative Office



Before



After

## Service Recovery Plan

- Deployment (staff deployed to Tremont and Houlika Clinics)
- Mobile Unit
- Modular Unit
- Planning
- Construction



### Mobile Unit

Under agreement  
from  
Coastal Family  
Health Services

Opened May 10



## Modular Unit

3,800 square feet with 7 exam rooms



(Received grant from AmeriCares for lease)

Opened June 15, 2011

## Lessons Learned Financial

- Maintain cash reserves adequate for an emergency
- Diversify revenue stream as much as possible
- “Don’t put all of your eggs in one basket”
- Reach out to relief organizations
- Review your insurance policies with your agent and understand your coverage
- Eliminate as much paper as possible in your daily operations
- Keep inventory of all equipment (even if not capitalized)

## Lessons Learned Emergency Planning

- Conduct table top drills with administrative staff, providers, and clinical staff and try to imagine possible scenerios
- Review PIN 2007-16 FTCA Coverage in Emergencies
- Review FEMA Public Assistance publications
- Designate a Relief Coordinator
- Have shirts with logos in addition to badges for all employees (needed for access)
- Plan, plan, plan for storage
- Have written agreements in place for mobile clinics

## Lessons Learned Emergency Planning (continued)

- Keep phone #'s current for suppliers of modular units, and storage units
- Protect servers and computer equipment from rain (drip pans), and flooding (racks and platforms)
- Have agreements in place with state health department to dispense tetanus and other vaccines
- Get to know your local Red Cross organizations and determine how you will work with them before a disaster
- Incorporate safe rooms into construction or purchase safe rooms for use by staff and patients

## Lessons Learned Emergency Response

- NACHC is your best friend in a disaster
- Keep all staff working (if possible)
- Develop a contingency plan for staff when a clinic cannot be occupied
- Utilize all available resources to keep patients informed (website, answering service, appointment reminder calls, Facebook, Twitter)
- Manually log staff and volunteer time if time system is not operational
- Keep inventory of all supplies used for disaster response
- Recognize signs of post-traumatic stress in staff and offer help

## The Process is More Important than the Plan!!



Photography courtesy of Tom Carroll ([carrollsports.com](http://carrollsports.com))