Emergency Operating Rooms

Saving Lives in War and Peace
Soroka Medical Center: An Overview

Soroka Medical Center is among Israel’s largest, busiest and most advanced hospitals. Soroka is the only major medical center in the entire Negev, serving a population of more than one million inhabitants, including 400,000 children, in a region that accounts for 60% of the country’s total land area. Soroka serves as the teaching hospital of both the Medical School of Ben-Gurion University, whose Faculty of Health Sciences is located on the hospital campus, and its Medical School for International Health.

On par with leading international institutions, Soroka specializes in areas that include early detection and treatment of breast cancer using minimally invasive procedures, non-invasive removal of malignant tumors, trauma rehabilitation of children and adolescents, pediatric infectious diseases, and more.

Each year, excellent care is provided for more than 595,000 visits at outpatient clinics; 248,000 patient visits at our Emergency Medicine Department (the busiest in the country); 83,000 inpatient admissions; over 30,000 surgical procedures ; and more than 17,000 babies are born.

Soroka’s Trauma Unit is one of the largest and busiest in Israel, always on call, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Soroka serves as the regional trauma center for victims of terror and for all Israel Defense Force bases in and near the Negev. This need is unfortunately constant and increasing in light of the ongoing security situation in areas bordering Gaza.

Soroka Medical Center stands at the forefront of medical progress, and is currently upgrading and enhancing research capabilities and the healthcare it provides. Soroka’s staff is dedicated to advancing research and providing optimal medical and emergency care while treating the patient as a whole human being.
The Need

Since the start of the missile and rocket attacks launched from the Gaza Strip, which first reached a peak with the Israel Defense Forces’ Operation Cast Lead in December 2008, was followed in 2012 with Operation Pillar of Defense, and continued most recently in 2014 with Operation Protective Edge, Soroka has been operating under grave threat. The medical center finds itself all too frequently on the front lines of medical care in its role as “Israel’s Iron Dome for Health.”

During Operation Protective Edge (2014), the Negev region, Israel’s southern front, was subjected to heavy barrages of rocket fire from Gaza. The ensuing ground operation resulted in hundreds of our soldiers and civilians being wounded, many critically.

Over the course of this difficult, stressful, and uncertain two-month period, Soroka’s devoted ER and trauma staff cared for 1,263 patients, including 775 soldiers and 484 civilians who were physically wounded or suffered emotional trauma during the military operation.

Soldiers sustained internal injuries and wounds to the head, eyes, and limbs. Civilians suffered from shrapnel injuries and emotional stress. The most severely wounded were brought by evacuation helicopter directly to Soroka Medical Center.

Each time the sirens sound in Beer-Sheva, Soroka is forced to close eight of its operating rooms, which are unprotected and vulnerable. There is an urgent need for protected operating rooms that will meet the IDF’s Home Front Command guidelines and allow for surgeries to take place under enemy fire.

Soroka has only ten general operating rooms that are protected against missile attacks.

During military operations against Gaza, they operate round the clock. The huge overload has forced us to operate in underground, outdated ORs dating from the 1960s, which had recently served as storerooms. This was a resourceful and lifesaving response, but the old ORs are unfit for twenty-first century medicine, and cannot serve as a permanent solution during emergencies.
Future ORs

The Medical Center has designated an area for the construction of additional protected operating rooms to be built according to the latest medical and security standards. The shell has already been constructed and stands ready, awaiting completion.

Costs

The cost of completing the additional protected operating rooms and the recovery rooms adjacent to them, a total of 540 square meters, is $2,000,000.

Donation and Donor Recognition

Each new protected OR can be named for a gift of $700,000. Full and prominent donor recognition will be provided at the new ORs and on the Wall of Honor at Soroka Medical Center. In addition, a dignified public dedication and naming ceremony will be held.

Equipment

Several items of equipment whose costs range from $5,000 to $60,000 are required for our operating room. Plaques recognizing the donors’ generosity will be prominently displayed on site.
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