

'Slyding' Immobile Patients To Safety

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Tulsa hospitals are getting better prepared to help you if there is an emergency.

During Hurricane Katrina, hospitals struggled with evacuating patients who couldn't walk when the elevators didn't have power. Local hospitals now have a way to get everyone out safely.

It's called the Paraslyde. It's corrugated cardboard, really. It weighs about seven pounds and when you take it apart, a patient fits inside, they go down the floor and down the stairs.

At hospitals, they train for evacuations five or six times a year. Firefighters say this is a simple evacuation system that can be operated by just a few people. And, they add it's the quickest way to get patients who are immobile out of harm's way.

"You can take a patient from the bedside, we're not moving them two or three different times," says Captain Michael Baker. "It's going to be an uncomfortable ride, but we're in a disaster, an emergency, we need to get you off this floor rapidly."

Jack Mahoney recently had his lower right leg amputated and says he's concerned about what would happen in an emergency.

"I've got serious thoughts about how to get out of this building if it were to catch on fire," he says.

This kind of ride away from danger may be a little scary, but the safety experts at St. John Medical Center say it's a quick and efficient way to get patients who can't walk away from danger out safely.

"We're going to have to carry our patients down the stairs," says Safety Manager Marsha Goodson. "We're a 14-story building, so we have to think about how we're going to do that and have a plan."

And, with this system, they can move someone rapidly and safely to a much safer place.

Now that they've proven the system works, they are in at all the major hospitals in the Tulsa area. The paraslydes cost about 200 dollars each, but can be folded up and used again. They are even easily transported to other hospitals.

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