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‘Active shooter’ will strike at Riverside County healthcare facilities as part of emergency training

Twelve Riverside County medical facilities will be training this for an event that officials hope will never happen.

The drill will simulate an “active shooter” who walks into a hospital or other medical facility armed with a handgun and begins firing at people. The drills will take place May 16 at several facilities in the eastern end of the county and May 17 on the western end. They are scheduled to start at 9 a.m. and end before noon.

“This is a situation that, of course, we hope to never have to face,” said Kim Saruwatari, head of the county’s Emergency Preparedness and Response division, which is coordinating the event. “But this is a possible reality in today’s world and it is important that health care providers be prepared in case the unthinkable happens.”

Saruwatari said officials are advising residents not to worry if they see various emergency vehicles parked outside their neighborhood hospital or skilled nursing facility. She said the training provides an opportunity for county health officials to work with local hospitals and practice emergency planning under some tense situations.

The drills will involve a wide range of simulations. In one, an actor portraying a gunman fires inside an emergency room, leaving behind “victims” and activating the SWAT unit. In a scenario on the other end of the spectrum, hospital officials will huddle together after the gunman leaves to discuss the scenario and what actions they would take if it were a real event. The drills will involve hundreds of people from police officers, firefighters, hospital security personnel, doctors, nurses and emergency workers.

The following is a list of facilities participating in the drills:

Riverside County Regional Medical Center, Moreno Valley
Eisenhower Medical Center, Rancho Mirage

Loma Linda University MC, Murrieta
San Geronio Memorial Hospital, Banning

Desert Regional Medical Center, Palm Springs
Kaiser Permanente Hospital, Moreno Valley
Parkview Community Hospital, Riverside
Canyon Springs Community Center, Cathedral City

Corona Regional Medical Center, Corona
Kaiser Permanente Hospital, Riverside
Orange Tree Nursing Center, Riverside
John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital, Indio