

# Lessons Shared

## *Hospital Liaison Program*

USDA Forest Service  
PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION



### Forest Hospital Liaison Program

The Klamath NF (KNF) is known for its tough and unforgiving terrain and long duration fire events. In response to the number of medical cases associated with these wildland incidents, the KNF developed a Hospital Liaison Program. The program was born out of frustrations being experienced by both the Forest and employees who were injured.

Problems encountered included:

- Delayed billings
- Billings sent directly to Forest
- Employees being billed directly
- Patients unsupported at hospital
- Unpaid bills being put into collections

*"Most people that get transported off of the fire line have no idea where they are going. They don't normally have a cell phone or money. We make sure the patient is being taken care of, providing transportation, lodging, meals and most important, support..."*

*-Hospital Liaison*

To mitigate these problems, the KNF developed a Hospital Liaison Program to:

- Provide Forest aid and comfort injured employees and their families
- Serve as a patient advocate to ensure employee has received appropriate primary and follow-up care
- Provide a contact for the employee to assist with needed paperwork
- Provide a Forest Service Liaison who has knowledge of ASC/OWCP and patient rights requirements
- Provide a conduit for correct and timely dissemination of information on patient status

During the month of August 2014, the KNF supported 47 patients with their Hospital Liaison Program. Liaisons responded to injuries at multiple hospitals in two states. Patients included Forest Service employees from across the country, Interagency partners, Cooperators, and Contactors. Injuries included injured knees and ankles, heart attacks, appendicitis, eye irritations, burns, heat related injuries, back injuries and intestinal problems.

**For additional information contact: Natalie Stovall [nstovall@fs.fed.us](mailto:nstovall@fs.fed.us)**