

## Large Full-Scale Active Threat Exercise Assesses Emergency Response

Emory University, in conjunction with the CDC and the six jurisdictions that comprise the Atlanta Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), held a full-scale active threat exercise on the Druid Hills campus early on the morning of March 14, 2018, and on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Roybal Campus on March 17, 2018.

In the early morning hours, large numbers of emergency vehicles and emergency response providers responded to calls about an active shooter on the Emory campus, and a police helicopter hovered overhead. Thirty minutes into the scenario, CDC security personnel discovered a van backed up to the agency's central loading dock packed with what appeared to be a large quantity of explosives. Potential explosive devices were also discovered at White Hall—one on the second floor and one in the bushes. As responders pursued the shooter, victims were evacuated to the emergency department of Emory University Hospital and to Grady Marcus Trauma Center.

The scenario was part of emergency drill coordinated by Emory's Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response (CEPAR), the CDC, and UASI. The latter is a Department of Homeland Security grant program that assists urban areas in preventing, preparing for, and responding to terrorist attacks and other all-hazard emergencies. The exercise, which was played out over two days, was designed to test participating organizations' response to a large-scale active threat within the Atlanta metropolitan region.

Participants included dozens of federal and local emergency response personnel (law enforcement, fire, 911 communications, rescue teams and public and private EMS) with the city of Atlanta, and Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, and Gwinnett counties. Personnel from CDC, Emory University, Emory Healthcare, and Grady Health System were involved.

**Sam Shartar**, senior administrator of Emory's Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response (CEPAR), directed the full-scale exercise. "The last exercise we conducted on this scale was a train derailment involving hazardous materials with multiple venues," says Shartar.

"This exercise scenario had been in the planning phase for a year and was chosen to test to interfaces with Emory Police, City of Atlanta police, and DeKalb County police. This is timely, because of Emory's recent annexation into the city of Atlanta. The exercise also provided the opportunity to test regional response capabilities with our regional partners."—*Martha McKenzie*