

Governor Phil Murphy

Press Pool Coverage: Governor Murphy Tours Field Medical Station at Atlantic City Convention Center

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ATLANTIC CITY – The federal government's field hospital at the Convention Center is operational and officials expect to take in the first patient as early as today.

Gov. Phil Murphy, Mayor Marty Small Sr. and Casino Reinvestment Development Authority Executive Director Matt Doherty toured the 258-bed medical facility Tuesday morning along with other officials from the New Jersey State Police, New Jersey National Guard and health professionals.

The field hospital site mirrors those already set up at the Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus and the New Jersey Convention and Exposition Center in Edison.

"That's the shortest runway between one of these tours and a patient walking through the doors," Murphy said, following the brief 10-minute preview of the facility. "That's a good sign in the sense that it's ready to go."

The pop-up site will be for non-COVID-19 patients to help alleviate pressure on local hospitals. However, officials said the field hospital's primary purpose could quickly change if necessary.

The site is under the operation of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in partnership with the State Police, state health officials and the region's Level 1 trauma center, Cooper Medical Center. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers selected the regional site and was responsible for the construction.

State Police Sgt. 1st Class Marc Pellegrino told Murphy and other officials that the Atlantic City Convention Center's infrastructure made the two-week conversion an easier process than at the other locations.

"It's the same setup as the other locations," Pellegrino said, "but you definitely have more sophistication (here)."

Rows of one-bed units blocked off by white curtains lined the Convention Center floor. The field hospital includes an on-site pharmacy and lab testing center.

The Convention Center has the ability to expand to accommodate nearly 3,000 hospital beds.

"We need the capacity," Murphy said. "Whether we need it next week, or a year from now, we don't ever want to be caught (off guard) again."



Dr. Richard Scott, a retired chief medical officer for Meridian Health and orthopedic surgeon, is overseeing the medical operations of the facility.

Scott, who drove up from Wilmington, North Carolina to volunteer, said his main objective is ensuring the safety and well-being of the hundreds of medical personal who will be staffing the site.

"There are a lot of people that left their left their jobs and left their families to come help others," Scott said. "So we're making sure they're following good safety procedures and protocols and that we've got all the personal protective equipment we need."

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