

Real-time National Special Security Event (NSSE) Monitoring 2004 G8 Summit, Sea Island, Georgia

BACKGROUND On May 31, 2004, FirstWatch® began tracking EMS calls coming into MedStarOne's emergency medical operation center in Savannah, Georgia; 80 miles from Sea Island, where President Bush hosted the 30th G8 Summit just eight days later. The Summit, one of the most high profile events in the world, brought together members of major industrial nations to discuss current political, economic and social issues on the international agenda.

This year's G8 Summit, held June 8 – June 10, was designated a National Special Security Event (NSSE) by the U.S. Government. For such events, the United States Secret Service is charged with security design, planning, and implementation; the Service is also responsible for key partnerships with all participating law enforcement, public safety and event officials.

In the days leading to the G8 Summit, numerous security warnings from federal and local intelligence revealed that Sea Island, located off Georgia's southern coastline, and its surrounding areas, could be prime targets for a bioterrorism attack. To prepare for the event, MedStarOne used FirstWatch to set up five sentinel event triggers (below) and a syndromic surveillance profile to look for unusual patterns in the EMS data. In any of these events, FirstWatch would automatically notify pre-assigned contacts, including emergency operation managers and directors at MedStarOne, infection control physicians at local hospitals, and a team of medical professionals and epidemiologists from Georgia's State Health Department who were actively involved in analyzing EMS data in real-time.

SUMMARY FirstWatch was selected by the Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Public Health and an expert team from the Center for Public Health Preparedness and Research at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health lead by James Buehler, M.D. and Gary Hlady, M.D., M.P.H. for grant-in-aid funding for the provision of state wide real-time data monitoring services. As the first agency in Georgia to take advantage of this new technology and funding source, MedStarOne, county and state health agencies were eager to install FirstWatch in order to monitor the G8 summit. The collaborative group defined both syndromic event and sentinel event triggers specifically designed with the G8 summit in mind.

SENTINEL EVENT TRIGGERS Using FirstWatch's Sentinel Event technology, officials were able to be notified (before first responders arrived on scene) any time a suspicious package, suspicious powder, bomb threat, civil disturbance/riot or explosion was reported to the 9-1-1 system. This technology provides early warning and reliable notifications to all agencies in order to better coordinate responses and interoperability.

SYNDROMIC EVENT TRIGGERS Using FirstWatch's advanced statistical analytics and methods, Savannah's

emergency response team tracked syndromes suggestive of a bioterrorism attack and other threats to public health.

SUPPLEMENTAL SURVEILLANCE In addition to FirstWatch's real-time offerings, epidemiologists and public health professionals also manually monitored additional (not real time) emergency room data sets and notifiable disease reports provided by labs and physicians. Using the grant-in-aid funding mechanism, the state is also funding implementation of FirstWatch for real-time monitoring of hospital data in addition to the 9-1-1 data sources.

ABOUT MEDSTARONE MedStarOne is part of Memorial Health, a two-state healthcare organization that serves 35 counties in southeast Georgia and southern South Carolina.

EVENT DATES

Initiated FirstWatch installation: May 28, 2004
Completed FirstWatch Installation: May 31, 2004
FirstWatch System Live: May 31, 2004

CONTACT INFORMATION

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