Pontificating in Civitas Autem Fraternitatis Caritatem

*Philadelphia Preps for a Peripatetic Papal Pass-Through*

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Two Questions

1. How does a papal visit differ from other special events and mass gatherings?

2. What could Philadelphia have done differently?
World Meeting of Families

• 2013: City learned it would host the Vatican-sponsored World Meeting of Families Sept. 22-25, 2015

• 2014: Pope Francis announced he would visit Sept. 26, 27, give outdoor mass
Answer #1: Security

- DHS designated visit National Security Special Event (NSSE) based on:
  - Size, significance, target potential
- US Secret Service lead agency for security
Security

• Level of security never before seen for special event in Philadelphia
• Pope’s 10-day trip to Cuba, Washington, New York, and Philadelphia perhaps biggest security operation in U.S. history

UN General Assembly
Security Measures

• The Traffic Box established
  – 5 sq. mile area closed to private traffic
  – Fences, magnetometers, vehicle check points
  – Delayed staff getting to shifts, pts to hospitals

• Contained STEMI, stroke, OB, trauma hospitals
The Traffic Box
Security Measures

• Air space restricted – medical helicopters
• > 1000 providers credentialed by USSS
• City encouraged visitors to use mass transit
  – Stations within Box closed
  – Riders walked rest of way, including elderly, infirm

Pilgrimage
Answer #1: Uncertainty

• No one really knew how many would come
• Pope Francis very popular
  – Crowds for previous masses up to 6 million
  – Initial predictions 1-3 million at mass
• How many patients?
• How sick would they be?
Consequences of Uncertainty

• Not clear how many supplies needed
  – Or providers, or ambulances
• Planning based on changing predictions
• Hospitals slow to free up staff to volunteer
• Scramble for volunteers and ambulances
Patient Encounters

• ~800,000 attended mass
• 10 medical tents treated 199; 21 transports
• 423 responses in “The Box”: 129 transports
• Activity for entire EMS system: about normal
• Blessing of good weather: temps 60°F-72°F
Answer #2: Done Differently?

• Given uncertainty, preparation appropriate
  – More than we needed, ready for much more

• Areas to improve:
  – Communication from planners to providers
  – Credentialing
  – Messaging to public
Questions