Several times a year Leon S. Peters Burn Center leaders train with other hospitals on how to handle a disaster with multiple victims. So when word came that 14 people had been injured in a gas line explosion in Fresno, staff began alerting surgeons, calling in more nurses and identifying extra beds in the hospital. The 16 bed burn center is nearly always full, and on April 17, when the PG&E line ruptured, it was also caring for Fresno Fire Capt. Pete Dern, burnt over 70% of his body after falling through a fiery roof just weeks before.

Community Regional Medical Center operates the only Level 1 trauma and comprehensive burn centers between Los Angeles and Sacramento, providing a vital resource for the Valley's critically injured.

“The we received five of the most significantly burned right away the day of the explosion. Two additional patients were transferred to us later that evening for a total of seven hospitalized with major burn injuries. We had two trauma surgeons and our burn surgeon on the site,” said Sandra Yovino, RN, director of burn services. Yovino also connected with other hospitals in Fresno and Madera who were getting the kind of patients they don't normally see.

In addition to treating burn victims, the burn center, which started in 1974 with the help of firefighters’ fundraising efforts, partners with local fire departments to educate the public on burn prevention and fire safety.

ADVANCING CLINICAL QUALITY: CommunityMedical.org/about-us

KIDS’ SPECIALISTS TREAT DEEPER SCARS

Community Region’s Leon S. Peters Burn Center provides the only comprehensive pediatric and young adult burn care services between Sacramento and Los Angeles. And its pediatric burn care team, which includes Kimberly Kozub, Community Region’s first child-life specialist, and other specialists such as child psychiatrists and social workers, not only focus on physical healing but on helping a younger patient to adjust to possible unseen scars — social withdrawn, emotional trauma and developmental delays. “The ultimate goal is to prevent stress and anxiety which could turn into long-term issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder,” said Sandra Yovino, RN, director of burn services.

As part of such work, Kozub sometimes steps outside the hospital to ease pediatric patients’ transition back to school by teaching classmates about burn injuries and what to expect.

She has personally introduced a timid child to a new occupational therapist in an outpatient clinic closer to his home. She’s also started a support group for child burn survivors to share ways to deal with changes in appearance, scars or questions about their burn injury.

ADVANCING CLINICAL QUALITY: CommunityMedical.org/about-us

Valley burn survivors can be assisted through the First Responders Burn Fund, named in honor of Capt. Pete Dern, at Leon S. Peters Burn Center. CommunityMedical.org/First-Responders-Fund

WHAt HAppENS WHen A HospitAl netWoRk And its coMMunity ARe connected? Find out At communityMedical.org/about-us