

Switching Roles to Meet a Need: From Library to Family Assistance Center in Under 15 Minutes



Dan Wilson, Assoc. Dir. Collections & Library Services
University of Virginia Health Sciences Library

Family Assistance Center: “Pop-up” facility designed to meet the needs of families impacted by a mass casualty situation

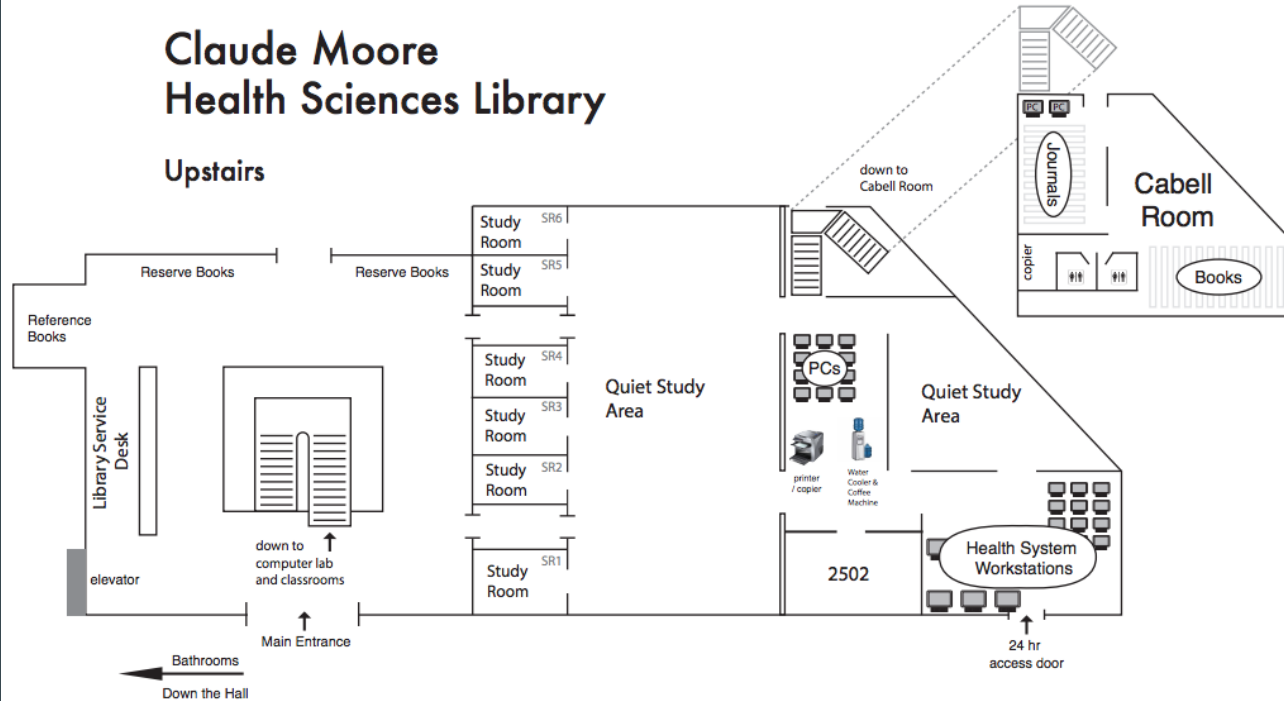


August 12, 2017: 1:45pm (19 injured / 1 death)

Photo: Jeremiah Knupp, USA TODAY Network

Claude Moore Health Sciences Library

Upstairs



I volunteered the use of the Health Sciences Library for the purpose of the FAC in 2015 after need expressed at a Health System Emergency Management Workgroup meeting.

FAC composed of registration, reception, command, telemedicine, chaplaincy, social workers, security, and Patient & Guest Services.

We decided to stand up our family assistance center early on. In the end they processed 35 family members, connecting them with their loved ones through telemedicine, and with social workers and chaplains. Often in these situations, you tend to focus more on your clinical operations, your logistics, but setting up a family assistance center alongside all of that is really key. Providing support to others and connecting them with their loved ones in times of crisis is the difference between an average-performing organization and a high-performing one.

Tom Berry, Director of Emergency Management, UVA Health System

Lessons Learned

- You and your space are valuable to emergency planners.
- Plan like something will happen. Be ready.
- Care for yourself. Reach out and pull in. Watch for emotional triggers, such as the anniversary of the event.

danwilson@virginia.edu