

## TACTICAL EMERGENCY MEDICINE: QUOTES FROM THE FIELD

“Shots fired! Officer down. Officer down!”

Moments later, the silence is broken, “Making entry. Roll fire. Code 3.”

A life is at stake. Waiting for trained medical support will decrease their colleague’s chances for survival.

With some basic medical knowledge, non-medical first responders can improve a victim’s odds for a full recovery. Tactical medicine saves lives by educating and training law enforcement officers in medical procedures, such as tourniquet application, airway management, splinting and wound care.

Rushdi Cader, M.D. ’95, Joe Nakagawa, M.D. ’00, and Atilla Uner (UCLA Emergency Medicine 1997 residency graduate) teach lifesaving techniques to local and federal law enforcement officers. Nakagawa and Uner support the Hawthorne Police Department, while Dr. Cader founded SWAT Trauma Assistance Training (STAT), a company that manufactures tactical training products and provides tactical medicine instruction throughout the state. John Pi (UCLA Emergency Medicine 1996 residency graduate) is one of the nation’s foremost experts in tactical medicine. Pi has been an FBI agent for 15 years. Currently he is a supervisory special agent based in Washington, D.C.

### **Dr. John Pi**

Supervisory Special Agent

FBI - Critical Incidence Response Group, National Assets Response Unit



John Pi at FBI SWAT Tactical Medical Training.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of the FBI

"Tactical emergency medicine is simply a specialized form of conventional emergency medicine adapted to save lives in law enforcement tactical situations. By focusing on life-threatening and limb-threatening conditions which can easily be reversed by simple medical and tactical procedures, tactical medical operators stand in the front line of law enforcement to deliver sound tactics and medical care to save lives."

**Dr. Atilla Uner**

Tactical Physician, Hawthorne Police Department  
Faculty, UCLA Emergency Medicine Center  
Associate Medical Director, UCLA Center for Prehospital Care



Atilla Uner (right) during defibrillator training.  
Photo Credit: Valerie Walker, MAA Director

“Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is the science of providing medical care in an out-of-hospital setting. In order to give lifesaving treatment to the acutely ill and injured with the limited supplies and diagnostics we can carry, we have to distill emergency medical care down to its most essential components. It requires the utmost expertise and skill to know what to do when and what to leave out. Tactical EMS is simply a necessity. We cannot let injured officers remain without help when a crime scene is not secure. And we cannot put private or fire department ambulance personnel in harm’s way by sending them into tactical situations for which they are not prepared.”

**Dr. Rushdi Cader**

Medical Director, San Luis Obispo Regional SWAT  
President, SWAT Trauma Assistance Training (STAT)  
Attending Physician, Sierra Vista Medical Center



Rushdi Cader, M.D. '95 (standing/right) demonstrates wound care.  
Photo Credit: Valerie Walker, MAA Director

“Tactical physicians typically sacrifice an inordinate amount of their time and resources for the protection of law enforcement officers. It is a passion born out of a physician’s respect and admiration for those who keep Americans safe. As part of their job, tactical

physicians find themselves in the back of an armored vehicle treating the injured and hoping their team returns safely. SWAT docs like Nakagawa, Pi and Uner are a special breed: part physician, part law enforcement and all heart! They are truly selfless. Simplifying emergency medical care for tactical operators through easy-to-learn acronyms and hands-on training creates a cohesive team of informed participants instead of a disarray of passive and frantic observers. The tactical environment is one in which a few measures applied rapidly and with familiarity by the first officer on scene can save the life of a fellow officer. If in the years that we do this work, one officer is saved, all of the sacrifice is worthwhile."

**Dr. Joe Nakagawa**

Medical Director, Tactical Medicine, Hawthorne Police Department  
Emergency Medicine Physician, Torrance Emergency Physicians Group



Joe Nakagawa, M.D. '00 (back center) during defibrillator training.  
Photo Credit: Valerie Walker, MAA Director

"I see tactical medicine as my way to help those men and women who put themselves in harm's way to help others. Law enforcement is a dangerous job, yet for so long officers were not given the tools and knowledge they needed to help themselves or their partners. We're here to fix that situation."