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Sent: 9/13/2017 5:42:53 PM
Subject: Gov. Rick Scott: I am Demanding Answers on Fatalities in Broward



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 13, 2017

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Gov. Rick Scott: I am Demanding Answers on Fatalities in Broward

HOMESTEAD, Fla. – This afternoon, Governor Rick Scott made the following statement regarding tragic news reports of multiple deaths in a nursing home in Hollywood Hills, Florida.

Governor Scott said, "I am absolutely heartbroken to learn of news reports of the deaths of multiple individuals in a nursing home in Broward County. Protecting the lives of Floridians is my top priority and that's why we have worked all week to help Floridians prepare and respond to Hurricane Irma. I am going to aggressively demand answers on how this tragic event took place. Although the details of these reported deaths are still under investigation, this situation is unfathomable. Every facility that is charged with caring for patients must take every action and precaution to keep their patients safe – especially patients that are in poor health. I have directed the Agency for Health Care Administration and the Department of Children and Families to immediately work with local law enforcement to conduct an investigation, and if they find that anyone wasn't acting in the best interests of their patients, we will hold them accountable to the fullest extent of the law. I am also asking available first responders to immediately check in with the healthcare facilities in their area to make sure nursing homes and assisted living facilities are able to keep their residents safe."

The state has taken the following actions regarding Hurricane Irma preparedness and response for healthcare facilities:

- Of Florida's total 309 hospitals, all operational facilities have power or are running on generator power. Ten Florida hospitals are currently closed and are continuing to coordinate with the state on reopening.
- More than 90 special needs shelters were opened to help patients in need. There are currently 61 open.
- The Division of Emergency Management and the Department of Education worked with school districts to offer school buses to aid in evacuation. Every school district with evacuations offered this service.
- Governor Scott, the Secretary for the Agency for Health Care Administration and the State Surgeon General have held daily calls with hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities since September 5th to ensure they have every needed resource to keep patients safe.

- **The Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills is responsible for the safety of their patients. Department of Health officials have been in contact with Larkin Community Hospital Behavioral Health Services management and the Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills over the past three days. Hospital administrators were advised to call 911 if they had any reason to believe that the health or safety of patients was at risk. Yesterday afternoon, the facility reported to the AHCA that they had power and access to fans and spot coolers provided by Memorial Healthcare.**
- **If ANY facility believes that their patients are in danger, they must call 911 and immediately work to get those in their care to safety.**
- AHCA and DCF have launched investigations. If they find that this facility was not meeting the state's high standards of care, they will be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law. These agencies will have investigators on site at the facility today.
- All nursing home facilities are required to have an emergency management plan. For nursing homes, this plan is required to be submitted and kept on hand by county emergency management officials. As part of the licensure process, AHCA confirms that the facility's emergency plan has been submitted to local officials.

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