

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL CARE COMMISSION MEETING
HELD ON MARCH 14, 2006, AT THE SOUTH FIRE-RESCUE STATION

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Michael Dennis called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. in the meeting room of the South Fire-Rescue Station. All members of the Commission were present.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Dennis led Pledge of Allegiance.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was approved as printed.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 28, 2006, MEETING

Vice Chairman Friedman moved approval of the minutes of February 28, 2006. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Furlaud. On call of the Chair, the motion carried unanimously.

V. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 7, 2006, MEETING

Since the March 7, 2006, Medical Care Commission report had not yet been received by the Commission Members, approval was tabled to the next meeting to be held on March 21, 2006.

VI. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

VII. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Chair Dennis commented that the Commission had considered that it would be helpful to provide an opportunity for citizens to comment to the Commission, and opened the floor for comments.

Mrs. Betty Friedman, 2500 South Ocean Blvd., asked if a patient could be rejected from any hospital and sent to another hospital?

EMS Coordinator Brian Fuller responded that, depending on the primary complaint the patients were transported to area hospitals that were best suited to care for them; for cardiac care it would be Palm Beach Gardens or JFK. The patient did have a choice, within reason. If the patient was in a life and death situation, there was not a choice, and the patient would be taken to the most appropriate facility. If a patient from the south end of Town was stable and wished to be transported to Good Samaritan Hospital, with the advice that a closer hospital would be by-passed. The patient would be asked by Fire Department personnel, to sign a release form.

Mr. Fuller explained that several years hospitals were allowed to go on diversion, where they could say that they were no longer able to take any more patients. That was no longer the case.

Chair Dennis pointed out that generally, cardiac patients that lived north of Royal Palm Way would go to Palm Beach Gardens; those that lived south of that location, patients would go to JFK. For trauma situations, Southern Blvd. was the dividing line – north of Southern Blvd. would go to St. Mary's Hospital; south of that location would go to Delray Medical Center.

Ms. Madeline Greenberg, 3360 South Ocean Blvd., commented that she was a care giver for her two elderly parents. She noted that several years ago there was a system which was called "Reverse 9-1-1". She expressed great concern for families with medical concerns during hurricane evacuation and asked if there were any plans in place for evacuation of those residents of the Town of Palm Beach.

Commission Member Goldblum commented that many people make deposits on rooms in West Palm Beach before hurricanes occur. He noted that during the last hurricane there were people trapped in their condominiums with no electricity. There had been procedural changes to address those types of situations.

Mr. Fuller commented that some residents were unable to evacuate themselves due to medical situations. He explained that the Palm Beach County Health Care system had a very good program in place for those types of situations. It required that people pre-register. He and the Assistant Chief of Operations conducted a campaign through the condominiums prior to hurricane season to educate residents. The program through the Palm Beach County Health Care Department was called "Speciality Care Needs Program." Pre-registered citizens could receive transport accommodations, and help in evacuating to a Special Needs Shelter, with trained personnel available

to care for the patients.

Administrative Assistant Sara Blake provided comments regarding the Special Needs Shelter, noting that evaluations were made at that facility before sending patients home. She provided the phone number for the Health Care Department at 659-1270; papers would then be sent out and the patient could pre-register.

Commission Member Stein suggested that the Town communicate very clearly with its citizens to ensure that everyone was aware of what was available.

Vice Chairman Friedman thanked everyone for coming today. He expressed concern that the Commission needed to improve communication with the citizens to encourage their attendance at the Commission meetings. He noted that the citizen input would help the Commission to improve care in the community.

Mr. Eugene Bivins, 3475 South Ocean Blvd., commented that communication could be improved by sending a letter to each manager of each condominium association, and ask them to request volunteers to represent the building at the Medical Care Commission meetings. Information could then be taken back to share with the residents of the building.

Discussion took place regarding the receipt of the medical survey being sent out by the Commission, and the likelihood of response.

Mr. Fuller explained some of the procedures related to flu shots and the Palm Beach County laws governing that service.

Mr. Fuller noted that the Town of Palm Beach website had a very lengthy hurricane preparedness section; the Fire-Rescue website also included information in that regard.

Ms. Greenberg complimented the Town of Palm Beach Fire-Rescue Department for its response to residents.

Discussion continued regarding hurricane preparedness and evacuation plans.

Vice Chairman Friedman commented that there was a distinguished volunteer program for emergency preparedness in Town, not only for hurricanes, but for any emergency that came up.

Commission Member Goldblum expressed concern for a better way to communicate directly to everyone in Town, since many people did not use computers to review the websites.

Mrs. Friedman noted that many south end residents read the Palm Beach Post, rather than the Palm Beach Daily News.

Commission Member Traverse commented that volunteers from each of the condominiums could attend the Commission meetings, and bring the information back.

Chair Dennis commented that the Palm Beach Daily News had done a wonderful job in covering the Commission meetings and getting the message out.

Commission Member Goldblum suggested that printed hurricane awareness information be delivered to every household in Palm Beach.

In response to the concerns of Ms. Greenberg related to JFK, Chair Dennis explained that the administrative staff and physicians of JFK would present a power point program at the next Medical Care Commission Meeting.

VIII. NEXT MEETING MARCH 21, 2006

IX. ANY OTHER MATTERS

Chair Dennis reminded all that the survey was in print, and was scheduled to be mailed next week. He also noted that there had been the offer of assistance from the Citizens Association and Palm Beach Civic Association in terms of volunteers, and that the Commission needed the help of volunteers.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Medical Care Commission Meeting of March 14, 2006, was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Michael Dennis, M. D.

Prepared by:
Susan A. Eichhorn
Town Clerk

