



Media Release

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HCHD Prepares for Hurricane Rita

Just weeks after it erected the makeshift Astrodome Clinic and cared for thousands of Katrina evacuees, the Harris County Hospital District (HCHD) is preparing to meet the community's emergency medical needs should Hurricane Rita affect our area.

"We learned a lot from our response efforts during Tropical Storm Allison and Hurricane Katrina," said George Masi, chief operating officer for HCHD and administrator of Ben Taub General Hospital.

"Fortunately, the hospital district has the experience, resources and procedures in place that allow us to react quickly during an emergency. There aren't many organizations that can say that."

HCHD's preparedness efforts include:

- Closing Quentin Mease Community Hospital and relocating patients and staff to Ben Taub Hospital.
- Closure of community health centers starting Thursday, Sept. 22. (See attached list.)
- Cancellation of Lyndon B. Johnson and Ben Taub General Hospitals' specialty clinics starting Friday, until further notice.
- Rescheduling elective surgeries and expediting inpatient discharges to free up hospital beds and services.
- Testing back-up power systems and topping off fuel supplies.
- Ensuring Ben Taub and Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospitals are appropriately staffed. Flooding and heavy rain make commuting difficult so rest areas are being set up inside hospitals so staff can sleep between shifts without leaving.
- Stocking 10 days worth of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies, as well as perishable and non-perishable food, and potable/bottled water.
- Making sure an adequate blood supply is on hand.

Patients are being encouraged to refill prescriptions ahead of time. Those feeling ill or under the weather can call HCHD's Ask Your Nurse program (713-633-2255) instead of heading directly to the emergency room. Callers can ask experienced nurses about their urgent health concerns 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

"HCHD will do what it does best, which is respond during emergencies when our community needs us," Masi said. "We cared for Katrina's victims at the Astrodome, in our hospitals and health centers, and in homeless shelters around the city. We're prepared to do the same with Hurricane Rita."

The Harris County Hospital District is the public healthcare system for the nation's third most populous county. In its 40th year, the hospital district operates Ben Taub General Hospital, Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital, Quentin Mease Community Hospital, 12 community health centers, a dental center, seven school-based clinics, 13 homeless shelter clinics and four mobile health units.

- More -

The 12 HCHD primary-care locations are:

Acres Home Health Center, 818 Ringold Street

Aldine Health Center, 4755 Aldine Mail Route

Baytown Health Center, 1602 Garth Road

Casa de Amigos Health Center, 1615 North Main Street

E. A. “Squatty” Lyons Health Center, 1712 First Street in Humble

Martin Luther King Jr. Health Center, 3601 North MacGregor Way

Northwest Health Center, 1100 West 34th Street

People’s Health Center, 6630 DeMoss Street

Gulfgate Health Center, 7550 Office City Drive

Settegast Health Center, 9105 North Wayside Drive

Strawberry Health Center, 927 E. Shaw Road in Pasadena

Thomas Street Health Center, 2015 Thomas Street

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