

A Message from the President

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internet, phones, and water.

We learned the medical community here in Florida is generous. We were approached by other county medical societies asking us if we needed any help. Dr. Michael Patete drove a humidifier down from Sarasota County for a physician's office! A wonderful gesture. The Neighborhood Health Clinic was worried about losing extremely expensive refrigerated medications but things did work out, and in fact they were able to open their space to physicians whose offices were unusable.

On the home front, the physicians I have spoken to commented that they had unexpected and poor landscaping work done! Yes, a lot of trees have left us but Florida is fertile and resilient and the greens will re-appear quickly. Now what is left over in the Naples area are mounds of landscaping debris starting to rot – be aware of this potential health hazard.

However, this is nothing like what Everglades City, Immokalee, and areas of Golden Gate have experienced. The destruction in these areas has affected many of our friends, neighbors, and patients. At our After 5 Social event on October 13th, hosted by Family Foot & Leg Center and Cavo Lounge, we did collect some supplies which were sent to those areas. I'm sure they will need more and I hope we can help them in the future as well. Fortunately, there has been an outpouring of help to these areas. I spoke with the CEO of the Guadalupe Center and she was amazed at all the help they received both monetarily and with supplies. There are still housing needs in the community and hopefully FEMA will provide much help as well. In the meantime, be on the lookout for patients who may be now living in unsafe, unsanitary conditions.

From our physician community we had many of you helping in all the hospitals, clinics, and your own facilities during the storm and in its aftermath. Thank you for all you did for the community. In this issue of *The Forum*, we have highlighted a few of our medical society members that stuck through the storm caring for patients at local hospitals. For those of us who were able to evacuate, this provides an interesting look into what it was like here on the ground.

We have had a tumultuous few months in Collier County. It is not often that we get a direct hit with a Category 3 hurricane. And may it be many more years until we see another storm that close to us! I hope all our members are back to a more normal existence and unscathed. We did not hear of any severe damage to any physicians' homes or offices. The greatest problems entailed electricity,

This won't be the last time we have to deal with a hurricane or bad storm I am sure (unless you move away). So, have we learned anything about how to prepare? First, we need to secure our families with a safe place to evacuate or hunker down. Whole house generators can be a big help, as well as all the hurricane windows/shutters. Stockpiled water is a must. Storing documents and keepsakes in plastic bins can be easy to take along or keep out of harm's reach.

Of course, our offices need to be protected. Since most of us are on electronic medical records at least we don't have to worry about protecting paper charts! Of course, the computers and electronic equipment need to be protected as well. Take photos of everything (particularly how all equipment is plugged in/connected!). Perishable medications, including samples, need protection. I was able to store some of my medications but lost many doses of samples I could not save. The pharmaceutical companies have been great in helping the patients, as well as replacing samples that were destroyed. Contacting their representatives is easy and helpful.

Another recommendation I have is find an office location close to the hospital or a fire station! My office is close to both and I had electricity, internet, and phone by Wednesday morning after the storm. Just a thought if you are planning to move your office. And importantly, be sure your patients in need have registered with a special needs shelter or made other arrangements, particularly for those with medical equipment.

All in all, we dodged a potentially devastating hurricane in Naples. Let us continue to help those less fortunate in Everglades City and Immokalee, and our neighbors in Puerto Rico. And, make sure that our patients don't become complacent if another storm approaches. While the damage for many was relatively minor this time around, there are no guarantees!

Courtesy of Naples Historical Society



Flashback: Hurricane Donna ripped through Collier County Sep. 10, 1960. Winds gusted over 180 mph and there was a 9.5' storm surge. Residents seeking safety at the Naples Depot shelter evacuated during the eye of the storm to the town's only bowling alley in North Naples.