



Gov. Scott: Nursing Home Should Explain Why They Didn't Call 911

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Today, Governor Rick Scott made the following statement regarding the Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills, where 11 people lost their lives in the wake of Hurricane Irma due to the facility's inaction to call 911 or evacuate their patients to one of Florida's largest hospitals located directly across the street.

Governor Scott said, "It's an absolute shame that this facility continues to not take any responsibility for the deaths of 11 people. This nursing home is directly across the street from a hospital, making their failure to evacuate or call 911 in a timely manner completely inexplicable and inexcusable.

"Any health care professional that thinks calling an elected official's cell phone instead of 911 when people are in need should not be allowed to have any access to patients. Because of their inexplicable failure, I have taken aggressive action to suspend their license and remove them from the state's Medicaid program. Every child knows that when there is imminent danger, 911 is the number to call. Yet, trained health staff at this facility didn't even do that. No one has offered an explanation for why the nursing home allowed these patients to perish, why they failed to call 911 until it was too late or why they failed to evacuate patients in danger to the hospital directly across the street.

"Thus far, the owners and operators of this facility have offered no explanation or defense for the deaths of these patients in their care, other than to say they left messages on my personal cell phone. The nursing home administrators placed four separate calls to my cell phone, like hundreds of others did during the storm. In each instance, the calls were promptly returned by state officials, and the voicemails were immediately deleted so the voicemail box had room for more incoming messages. In none of these calls did the staff indicate that any of their patients were in danger. I gave my cell phone number out as a courtesy to any group during the hurricane that needed access to state resources. It's a ridiculous and irrational suggestion that my personal cell phone is somehow a substitute for 911.

"There were over 100 nursing homes that reportedly lost power during Hurricane Irma, but this is the only facility that allowed patients to die. I fully expect that those responsible for these senseless deaths will be brought to justice, and a criminal investigation is well underway by the

Hollywood Police Department with the help of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Nothing can hide the fact that this health care facility failed to do their basic duty to protect life and the state will aggressively continue to hold this facility accountable.”

As the Governor’s Office has said, the voicemails were immediately deleted once the information was collected by staff and transmitted to the appropriate agency for handling, which is in accordance with Florida’s public record law and record retention policy. Each call was quickly returned. The information collected from the voicemails was released to the public last week along with more than 150 pages of documentation, including emails, notes, call log information and other relevant records (available [HERE](#)).