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Rapid Deployment Team to the Rescue

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Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center opened its doors to approximately 100 patients from local nursing homes who were displaced due to the impact of Hurricane Sandy. The hospital staff was joined by 70 Commissioned Corps Officers of the United States Public Health Service, who traveled to Brooklyn, from Washington, D.C. and the greater metro areas in response to the hurricane. The patients are expected to stay for several weeks or longer.

Brookdale volunteered to accommodate these individuals following a request for bed space from the New York State Department of Health and the New York City Office of Emergency Management. In preparation for the influx of patients, Brookdale staff worked around the clock to reopen 1½ floors of the hospital that have not been in operation. The work included updating electrical and plumbing fixtures, painting, and

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adding new bedding and other amenities. Additional emergency personnel also came from Disaster Medical Assistance Teams from Minnesota and Texas.

“It goes a long way to try and provide a small dose of comfort to these displaced individuals during what are clearly very trying times,” said Brookdale CEO and President Mark Toney. “Brookdale is a community facility, meaning that we consider it a duty to open our doors when our neighbors are in need.

“Our dedicated employees, many of whom have flooded homes of their own, worked overnight to prepare to receive these patients and exemplify this spirit of giving back. I also want to thank the U.S. Public Health Service and all the other emergency medical personnel, whose staff travelled several hours and is now stationed at the hospital to provide the critical care that the patients deserve.”

The primary purpose of this Rapid Deployment Force, known as PHS-2, is to provide health services when requested by states affected by natural and man-made disasters. The officers of the Commissioned Corps, who are managed by the U.S. Surgeon General, are comprised of physicians, nurses, environmental health officers, epidemiologists, engineers, nutritionists, pharmacists, and program analysts, team up for missions. This response has provided an opportunity for America’s uniformed service of public health professionals, the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, to execute its mission of protecting, promoting, and advancing the health and safety of the nation.

“It is an honor for our team of Public Health Service Officers to hone our skills while providing services to a community following the devastation of Hurricane Sandy. We embrace this opportunity to reach out to individuals who most need our services. We also want to thank Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center for their unparalleled professionalism and strong commitment to the community that they serve,” said Captain Calvin Edwards, PHS-2 Team Commander.

Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center is 530-bed medical center and an accredited community teaching hospital with a large network of community-based ambulatory care centers. It offers an array of acute inpatient and outpatient services and serves a community with a population of over one million residents.