



## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **HEART OF FLORIDA, LAKE WALES DONATE TO AID HURRICANE RELIEF EFFORTS**

**Lake Wales, FL** – Continuing a longstanding tradition of being good community partners, Heart of Florida Regional Medical Center and Lake Wales Medical Center recently donated a total of \$30,000 to two agencies to assist with relief efforts after Hurricane Irma struck Polk County in September.

Heart of Florida CEO Ann Barnhart presented a check for \$15,000 to the Frostproof Care Center, and Lake Wales CEO Rebecca Brewer presented a check for \$15,000 to Lake Wales Care Center.

“As large organizations, it’s important to us to partner with our community to assist those who were on the front lines of hurricane cleanup and restoration,” Barnhart said. “Our hospitals sheltered large numbers of special needs evacuees, and we know that there were many in the community who were helping get the damage cleared and making people’s homes safe for them to return.”

Brewer added, “Right after the storm, the hospitals were the only places that had hot food, so we set up and served our community until power began being restored at area restaurants and in neighborhoods. We also had lobbies full of people charging their cell phones and other devices so they could stay in communication with family members.”

Rob Quam, Executive Director at Care Center, said his agency was active in helping people clear storm debris, patch and cover roofs, and other needed repairs in the days immediately after the storm. Lake Wales Care Center also has provided financial assistance to people to help fund repairs, make up for loss of income, and cover bills and other expenses.

Frostproof was hit hard by the storm, with many residents out of power close to two weeks. Two of them, who are dependent on supplemental oxygen, couldn't return home because they were still without power. Frostproof Care Center Executive Director Christie Sitek volunteered to put them up in a hotel; she personally picked them up from the special needs shelter and transported them to the hotel in Lake Wales. Frostproof Care Center not only provided their hotel expenses, but also ensured they had food throughout their stay. Frostproof Care Center also checked on them regularly and kept tabs on the progress with the house and power to ensure their homes were safe to return to. That case was just one example of how Frostproof Care Center responded to help those in need in their community after the storm.

"We are proud of our tradition of always being a good community partner, and we are appreciative of the support of our corporate office that enables us to continue giving back to the communities we serve," Brewer said.

Lake Wales Medical Center is a 160-bed acute care hospital accredited by the Joint Commission. With more than 500 employees and 60+ active staff physicians, the hospital has been serving the medical needs of the community since 1928.

Heart of Florida Regional Medical Center is a 193-bed acute care hospital accredited by the Joint Commission and an accredited Chest Pain Center by the Society for Cardiovascular Patient Care, Heart of Florida Regional Medical Center puts quality health care front and center.

*Info: Two sister hospitals donated \$30,000 to the Lake Wales and Frostproof Care Centers in October to assist them with the costs of the services and relief efforts they provided to the community after Hurricane Irma. Pictured are, from left, Ann Barnhart, CEO of Heart of Florida Regional Medical Center, Frostproof Care Center Executive Director Christie Sitek, Lake Wales Medical Center CEO Rebecca Brewer, and Lake Wales Care Center Executive Director Rob Quam.*

**Photo Credit: Charles A. Baker, III**



Lake Wales Medical Center and Heart of Florida Regional Medical Center are owned in part by physicians.