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BATTALION CHIEF DEPLOYED TO ASSIST WITH POST HURRICANE MEDICAL CARE

Glendale, Ariz. — Glendale Fire Battalion Chief Chris Gustafson was deployed to New York on Monday, November 12th for up to two weeks as part of a Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT). A DMAT is a group of professional and para-professional medical personnel organized to provide rapid-response medical care or casualty decontamination during a terrorist attack, natural disaster, or other incident, primarily in the United States. DMATs are part of the National Disaster Medical System and operate under the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Team members are normally on alert 3 times a year for one month at a time. AZ-1 DMAT was on call for December, but was activated early to replace teams that were operating in the area following Hurricane Sandy.

At present, the team is stationed at Nassau Community College in NY, providing medical care and monitoring for a large shelter. One section is housing a special needs care area for approximately 40 nursing home patients that were displaced. Care includes day-to-day needs, wound dressing changes, med refills and locating new living quarters.

In another area, a population of 600 plus people is sheltered in the gym and care is provided through a 24-hour clinic staffed by DMAT. The main concern at the moment is controlling the spread of the Norovirus (stomach flu) through the shelter population.

The team is staffed with 42 members from Arizona and supplemented with personnel from teams from Alaska, Kentucky, Utah, Maryland, Colorado, Hawaii and Oklahoma for a total of 66 personnel. Specialties include doctors, nurse practitioners, RN's, LPN's, medics, EMT's, logistics, communications and command.

Currently, Chris is acting Operations Chief for the team and filling in as needed with medical duties. The team is expected to remain deployed through Sunday, the 25th.

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