



Shriners Hospitals And Our Lives

Shriners Hospitals Waive Age Limit For Rhode Island Nightclub Fire Victims

(NAPSA)—When Shriners Hospitals for Children opened its doors to victims of the tragic West Warwick, R.I., nightclub fire it marked only the second time in its 80-year history that Shriners Hospitals agreed to accept and treat adult patients. The first time was immediately following the World Trade Center tragedy on Sept. 11, 2001, though no victims were admitted to the hospital.

The decision to treat the burn patients, all over the age of 21, came from Imperial Sir John D. VerMaas, Shriners Hospitals' Chairman of Board of Trustees, and Peter Armstrong, M.D., Shriners Hospitals' director of medical affairs, at the request of Robert Sheridan, M.D., assistant chief of staff of the Boston Shriners burn hospital.

"This was such a horrible tragedy that we wanted to do everything we could to help out, including waiving the age limit on our burn hospital patients," VerMaas said.

Although the Boston Shriners Hospital is a pediatric burn hospital, the staff was prepared. According to Robert Bories, administrator, the hospital conducts regular disaster drills.

Ralph Pino, chairman of the Board of Governors of the Boston Shriners Hospital, pointed out: "These adult fire victims were admitted on the same basis as children are admitted. All medical treatment is being provided at no cost to the patients, their families or any third party, including insurance companies. They will remain our patients until they have improved enough to be transferred



John Haugh, R.N., left, accepts the thanks of Rhode Island Governor Donald Carcieri, for the outstanding work done to treat Rhode Island fire victims. Looking on are Mrs. Carcieri and Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney.

to a hospital closer to their home. If there was ever a single event to instill pride in the Shrine and our Shriners Hospitals, this was it."

For more information on Shriners' network of 22 hospitals that provide medical care and services totally free of charge to children with orthopaedic problems, burns and spinal cord injuries, write to: Shriners International Headquarters, Public Relations Dept., 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa, FL 33607, or visit the Web site at www.shrinershq.org. Treatment is provided to children under age 18 without regard to race, religion or relationship to a Shriner.

If you know a child Shriners can help, call 1-800-237-5055 in the United States, or 1-800-361-7256 in Canada.