

62 FLORIDA RV PARKS OFFER FREE HOUSING TO HOSPITAL DOCTORS AND NURSES WHO CANNOT SAFELY GO HOME FOR FEAR OF INFECTING THEIR FAMILIES WITH THE CORONAVIRUS

The charitable effort is being coordinated by the Florida Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds and the Central Florida Disaster Medical Coalition

Sixty-two RV parks and resorts across Florida have agreed to provide a month's worth of free housing to doctors and nurses who cannot safely stay in their own homes because of their exposure to patients with COVID-19.

The charitable effort is being coordinated by the Central Florida Disaster Medical Coalition and the Florida Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds.

"Our members obviously recognize the magnitude of the COVID-19 crisis and want to help out in any way they can," said Bobby Cornwell, executive director and CEO of the Florida Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds.

He said 62 parks have already offered to provide 30 days' worth of housing to hospital doctors and nurses at no cost and he continues to receive emails from park operators willing to participate. So far, the majority of the parks willing to provide free accommodations are affiliated with Sun Communities.

Lynne Drawdy, executive director of the Central Florida Disaster Medical Coalition, said the temporary housing is intended for Florida-based healthcare professionals who need a safe place to stay while they treat COVID-19 patients.

"These are people who can't risk going home and exposing their family members to the coronavirus," Drawdy said.

She said the idea of using RV parks as temporary housing came from Fay O. Pappas, an attorney in Winter Park, who was worried about her brother, a local trauma surgeon who was having to live in his family's garage for fear of contaminating his family if he unknowingly came into contact with the coronavirus. Pappas has been spearheading the collaborative efforts involving the Florida Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds and the Central Florida Disaster Medical Coalition

RV parks often have park model RV rentals, which are self-contained,

free standing, cottage-like units with their own private kitchens, bathrooms and air conditioning systems.

RV parks are also laid out over many acres and give people the ability to maintain social distancing easier than hotel facilities.

Drawdy said hospitals in the greater Tampa and Orlando areas already have indicated they have healthcare professionals who want to take advantage of the free housing offer.

The attached spreadsheet from the Florida Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds includes a list of the RV parks and resorts that have agreed to provide 30 days of free housing to hospital-based healthcare professionals. The Central Florida Disaster Medical Coalition has shared this information with healthcare organizations across the state, and Bobby Cornwell of the Florida Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds is helping connect the healthcare professionals with the parks closest to their hospital locations.

About the Central Florida Disaster Medical Coalition

The Central Florida Disaster Medical Coalition develops and promotes healthcare emergency preparedness and response capabilities in nine counties, including Brevard, Indian River, Lake, Martin, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, St. Lucie, and Volusia Counties. The Coalition helps healthcare providers to work collaboratively to build, strengthen and sustain a healthcare preparedness and response system within Central Florida and to assist federal Emergency Management and ESF8 (Health and Medical) with preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation activities related to healthcare disaster operations. For more information, please visit <https://www.centralfladisaster.org/home>.

About the Florida Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds

Based in Tallahassee, the Florida Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds is the trade association for Florida's privately owned RV parks and campgrounds. The association markets privately owned and operated parks through CampFlorida.com, the travel planning website. The association also

publishes a free printed camping guide, which can be ordered through CampFlorida.com.