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**MAYOR EMANUEL, CONGRESSMAN GUTIERREZ CONVENE CHICAGO LEADERS TO
DISCUSS RELIEF EFFORTS TO PUERTO RICO**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and U.S. Congressman Luis Gutierrez today convened a meeting of Chicago elected officials, community leaders and private stakeholders to discuss relief efforts underway in Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricane Maria and plan what next steps are needed to support recovery on the island.

"Chicago is home to a proud Puerto Rican community, and since Hurricane Maria struck, Chicagoans on every level have responded not only with our hearts, but with our wallets to help our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico," said Mayor Emanuel. "We will continue to support the people of Puerto Rico rebuild and recover from this terrible tragedy, and continue to welcome countless families with open arms."

On Wednesday, 23 members of the Chicago Fire Department including firefighters, paramedics, EMTs and engineers will fly to Puerto Rico with defibrillators, stretchers, communications equipment and other supplies. The delegation will spend 10 days on the island and provide an on-the-ground assessment of additional resources needed.

The Mayor and the Congressman coordinated with United Airlines to deliver much needed supplies from Chicago to the island, and welcomed evacuees as they arrived at O'Hare last week. The Congressman returned from a visit to Puerto Rico on Sunday and was able to provide a first-hand account of the current conditions and talk about the resources still needed.

"Puerto Rican's on the island are working hard under difficult circumstances but are making progress hand in hand with FEMA, private groups and US cities and towns sending aid. They need communications, helicopters, engineers and organizational support, which should come from the US military immediately because some people still haven't been contacted, supplied or rescued," said Congressman Gutierrez. "Right now on the mainland and in Chicago we should be thinking about evacuation and how we give refugees from Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands a safe place to recuperate until things improve."

On September 25, 2017, United Airlines began humanitarian efforts for residents impacted by Hurricane Maria.

The Chicago Department of Aviation led an operation to receive evacuees on these humanitarian flights. A reception area was set up in conjunction with additional city agencies, the Red Cross and The Salvation Army to address immediate needs (i.e., mental health services, personal items, and hydration items). Once in Chicago, United provided the residents services including a one night hotel stay and connecting travel to alternate destinations.

To date, an estimated 1,600 Puerto Rican residents have traveled to Chicago on United and have been provided with assistance and/or connected with family who live in the area.

The Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) continues coordinating with the Chicago Fire Department, the Chicago Police Department, the Department of Aviation, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, Chicago Department of Public Health, Animal Care and Control, as well as the Red Cross and Salvation Army to help those affected by disasters in Texas, the US Virgin Islands, St. Maarten, Mexico and Puerto Rico.

The Fire Department will transport the following supplies to Puerto Rico on Wednesday:

- 5,000 2 x 2 gauge
- 1,000 flash lights
- 1,000 battery mixed between D battery & C battery
- 500 defibrillator with batteries
- Six cases of 3cc syringes
- Five cases of 100 burn sheet
- Five cases of oxygen nebulizers
- Cables and 400 hundred pads for monitors and AED
- 20 quick response bags
- 12 monitors with chargers and batteries
- 10 AED Lifepaks
- Nine Model 30 Ferno Patient Stretchers
- Six auxiliary stretchers
- PPE three cases full of outer wear.

Puerto Rico has been declared a national disaster and Chicagoans with impacted family members are encouraged to have them register for FEMA assistance immediately by going online [towww.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov).

To donate or search for volunteer opportunities, a verified list of organizations and charities can be found at: www.cityofchicago.org/DisasterRelief