

Training For Warfare, Trauma

Dr. Jeffrey Schock

Special to the Jewish News

While U.S., Israeli and Palestinian leaders were talking peace in early November, a delegation of 34 American and Canadian physicians and other health professionals traveled to Israel to participate in a grueling state-of-the-art training program in medical emergency and disaster preparedness.

The five-day program was organized by the Israeli Ministry of Health/Home Front Command, Israeli Defense Forces Medical Corps, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine and American Physicians Fellowship for Medicine in Israel (APF).

The Detroit contingent was represented by me, of Tri-County Urologists, P.C. and vice chair of urology at Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills; Dr. Warren Brandes of ENT Surgical, P.C., on staff at Botsford and elsewhere; Dr. Harold Friedman, cardiologist, on staff at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak; and Dr. Dan Benjamin, obstetrics-gynecology, on staff at Huron Valley-Sinai Hospital in Commerce.

The APF Emergency and Disaster Management Program provides physicians and other medical personnel from all specialties advanced training in emergency and disaster management, which benefits patients in their home countries.

Objectives of the intensive medical pro-

gram are:

- Five days in Israel learning from experts.
- Meetings with senior officials from the Ministry of Health and the Medical Corps of the IDF.
- Briefings on psychological preparedness, coping with population under stress/terror, triage and treatment protocols.
- Visiting hospitals and medical centers uniquely equipped for emergency preparedness.

• Participating in drills for non-conventional warfare at the Computerized Simulation Center at Sheba Medical Center at Tel Hashomer in Tel Aviv.

• Visiting doctors trained alongside their Israeli colleagues in several civilian and military settings exchanging expertise in how to respond to emergency scenarios involving conventional military/terrorist attacks and non-conventional threats from infectious, toxicological, chemical and radiological agents.

As guests of the Israeli Ministry of Health and the IDF Medical Corps, participants were granted access and insight into

the local, regional and national preparedness plans of the military and civilian health systems in Israel.

Among the highlights of the visit were a toxicological drill at Assaf Harofeh Medical Center in Tzrifin, hands-on emergency and trauma simulations at Sheba Medical Center at Tel Hashomer and review of military/civilian disaster preparedness arrangements with the IDF Medical Corps, Israeli Home Front Command and Magen David Adom (the Israeli equivalent of the American Red Cross).

As part of the working tour of communities under stress, the group traveled to the southern Israeli city of Sderot. Thirty minutes prior to our arrival, a Kassam rocket landed 100 yards from the access road we were traveling to enter the city. The group experienced first-hand the dangers to the community, but more importantly, we met the role model volunteers of Magen David Adom, the mental health workers, the teachers and countless others who risk their lives on a daily basis to care for their fellow citizens.

The stresses placed on all segments of the population and healthcare system on a daily basis as well as in emergencies are substantial. What is most impressive is how everyone — individuals, families,

communities, the military and government — coordinate their collective resources, particularly in times of crisis. Any assistance we, as American doctors, can provide in this area is most appreciated by the Israeli medical community.

Additionally, I am now better prepared to treat the wounded from not only conventional physical body trauma, but also patients exposed to biological and chemical agents.

Dr. Brandes commented, "The APF course in Israel was a life-altering experience and gave us an in-depth knowledge of bio-terrorism and the risk we face in the Western world." □

Dr. Jeffrey Schock is a Farmington Hills resident. He works out of several local hospitals.



Dr. Schock in a chemical warfare protective suit at Sheba Medical Center at Tel HaShomer in Tel Aviv

Dr. Schock and Brandes have begun introducing these new skill sets to affiliated Metro Detroit hospitals to better prepare the medical community for catastrophic, mass casualty events. For more information about the American Physicians Fellowship for Medicine in Israel program or the Emergency and Disaster Management Program, visit the APF Web site at www.apfmed.org. Send questions via e-mail to Schock (jeffreyschock@gmail.com) or Brandes (carpediem1492@aol.com).