

NO-COST LODGING FOR COPS VISITING THE MAYO CLINIC IN ROCHESTER

By Mike Walsh, Rochester, Minnesota Police Department

Rochester has long been known for the Mayo Clinic and the fine medical care provided there. People from all over the world come to Mayo for medical needs, including law enforcement officers and their family members.

It is not at all uncommon for Officers from the Rochester Police Department to be approached by out of town cops who are in Rochester for Mayo related reasons. They stop us to say hello, to trade patches, to ask us where to eat, where to go, things to do, etc. We also from time to time get calls from departments around the country, where a co-worker of a law enforcement officer at Mayo calls to say "One of my co-workers is at Mayo... can you help them out at all or look out for them?" We certainly do what we can to help, but aside from general advice or little things, there has typically not been a lot we could do for our fellow law enforcement officers or their families.

That changed earlier this year through the hard work and efforts of Officer Don Bray of the Rochester Police Department. Don was able to find and secure lodging that law enforcement officers visiting the Mayo Clinic could use at no cost. We all know how expensive medical care can be when we are in our own home areas, let alone when we have to travel miles and miles for care and stay extended periods of time away from home because of it.

Don was able to make arrangements for two apartments near downtown, close to Mayo, to be available for use only by visiting cops and their family members. These apartments will make the costs of out of town medical care less of a concern for cops in need. Great job Don!

One apartment is for short-term visitors, the other for longer-term visitors. Both are in a great location, fully furnished, and provided at absolutely no cost to cops and their family members. The apartments are paid for via private donations and through the Rochester Police Benevolent Association and the Olmsted County Deputy Sheriffs Association.

The apartments are only for use by those seeking medical treatment here in Rochester; they are not for use for vacations or other non-medical events.

If you know of any cops who are coming to Rochester for medical reasons and they would like to stay in one of the apartments, please have them get in touch with Officer Don Bray via email at dbray@rochestermn.gov or via his cell phone at 507-251-3197.

Simply due to scheduling reasons, the earlier those who would like use of the apartments contact Don, the better for everyone, as they can and do get scheduled out ahead and booked up. These apartments are also not limited to just cops from Minnesota; they are for use by law enforcement officers from anywhere.

If any of your associations would like to make donations to help pay for these apartments, please feel free to do so! Donations can be made to the Rochester Police Benevolent Association, C/O Don Bray, 101 SE 4th Street, Rochester, MN 55904:

Please spread the word about the availability of the apartments.

This letter is in response to the housing available from the Rochester Minnesota Police Department.

My wife was in need of medical attention at MAYO Clinic in Rochester. I read the article in the IPA Journal concerning the Rochester Police Department offering free housing to Officers and their families who are visiting MAYO Clinic for medical needs. I contacted Officer Don Bray of the Rochester Police Department who advised that they have two apartments available. The dates were set for the Clinic visit. I then contacted Officer Bray and the apartment was confirmed. Upon our arrival we were met at the apartment building by a Rochester Police officer and taken to the apartment. It was nicely furnished with two beds, a full kitchen and even some necessities that were stocked. Other officers who had stayed there furnished some of the items in the apartment. The location was close to the Clinic and easy to get to. We were scheduled to stay three day. On the third day we learned that we needed to stay another day so the wife could have further testing. I called Officer Bray and advised that it was no problem to stay another day. This is a service of caring and concerned Law Enforcement Officers. These officers and local Police Associations work had to provide this service at no cost to those officers and family members who need a

place to stay. I am sure fundraisers and donations are taken to keep these apartments available. I commend the Officers of the Rochester Minnesota Police Department for this great service. On the last day of our visit I left several items for the next occupants to use, including items from the Illinois Police Association. Thank you so much fellow officers for helping your brothers when in need.

Ken Thomason

Past President

Illinois Police Association.