

Doc: Ailing rep. fit to see space launch

Written by Administrator
Tuesday, 22 March 2011 12:34



Dr. Gerard Francisco (left) gives a medical update on U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords during a news conference in Houston, Texas on March 11. (AP photo/David J. Phillip)

HOUSTON — Mass shooting survivor Rep. Gabrielle Giffords of Arizona faces “a good possibility” of being able to attend and personally witness her astronaut-husband’s space shuttle launch next month from Cape Canaveral in Florida, declared Gifford’s Filipino-American doctor Gerard Francisco.

Francisco, chief medical officer of TIRR (The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research) Memorial Hermann in Houston and head of the team overseeing Giffords’ rehabilitation, said the Democratic congresswoman continues to make a rapid recovery from a near-fatal gunshot to the head, and may be well enough to be at the April 19 launch of the Space Shuttle Endeavour final mission in space to be commanded by Giffords’ husband Mark Kelly.

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“The goal is for her to witness the launch in April,” the University of the Philippines medical graduate physician said in a press conference on March 11.

“So we want to make sure that when the time comes for the shuttle launch, if they (Giffords family) decide to take her there, that she will be ready to participate in that activity.”

“If the goal is for her to witness the launch in April, our No. 1 concern is whether it will be safe and appropriate,” he added.

“We’re planning towards that, but there are no details we can share. There are a lot of options we’re considering at this point.”

Giffords, who was shot in the head at close range, was among 13 people wounded in a Jan. 8 attack on a community gathering in front of a supermarket in Tucson.

Six people were killed, including a federal judge and a girl, 9, and 12 others were wounded.

Since she was moved to TIRR on Jan. 21, Giffords has shown “miraculous” signs of recovery, especially through music, even singing “Happy Birthday” to her husband and the pop tune “American Pie” together with a friend of the family.

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REP. GARRISON OF CALIFORNIA, who has a long history of supporting space exploration, said she is fit to see the launch. She said she is a "big fan" of the space program and is "excited" to see the launch. She said she is "praying" for a successful launch and is "looking forward" to seeing the launch.