



Preparedness equals Resiliency



ALCA Florida Chapter's Professional Development Committee thought this information was important for our members. Please take a moment to review the information regarding Hurricane Preparedness.

FL Dept of Health Hurricane Preparedness – 2019

“Preparedness equals Resiliency”

Florida Dept of Health presented a seminar in Tampa in February 2019, addressing special needs of clients with cognitive impairments who live at home and may not be able to develop and execute an emergency plan without assistance. The presentation highlighted the difficulties that both caregivers and those with cognitive impairments could experience.

Key Points:

1. The role of family planner: If that role fell to the person with a cognitive impairment, is another family member able to adopt this role?
2. Does the planner understand the impact of being in a shelter?
 - a. Crowded conditions, lack of privacy
 - b. Cot for sleeping may present difficulty with rising to standing position
 - c. Limited availability for bathing
 - d. Many special needs shelters do not accept pets
 - e. Ratio of RNs/ARNPs to people in special needs shelter is 1:20
3. When assisting the planner (especially if they have some cognitive issues), ask open-ended questions or have them repeat back information to be sure they truly understand.
4. Plans should be written in a simple and brief format with bulleted steps that are easy to understand and follow.
5. Commuting to a safe location can take longer than expected due to the numbers of people trying to evacuate. Consider the need for bathroom breaks during travel, especially if the client uses Lasix or related medications.
6. Encourage caregivers and clients to refrain from repeated TV updates during hurricanes. This can elevate stress. Ask a neighbor or other trusted individual to call caregiver with important updates.

7. For people who refuse to consider a shelter, ask if the client lost power during a storm in the last 3 years. Ask them what their plan is to prevent suffering and remain comfortable following storm's aftermath.
 - a. Emergency personnel may not be able to reach them if injured
 - b. Source of water and food for 5-7 days
 - c. No electricity for cooking, oxygen, hot water, etc.
 - d. Communication limited or not available at all – cell phones and Internet not working
8. If client plans to evacuate to a shelter:
 - a. Caregivers should visit shelter in advance so they will know what to expect.
 - b. Take the client for a “test-run” in a simulated environment to see how they function. If the client becomes overwhelmed, an alternative to a shelter will be needed.
9. Medical Care Considerations/Special Needs:
 - a. Dialysis – shelter can provide transport but may be to a different dialysis center than client usually uses.
 - b. Shelters cannot provide any wound care or therapy.
 - c. Shelters can get medicine, but specific prescription details are required.
 - d. Oxygen need must be 3 liters or less.
10. Dietary considerations – expect these foods to be high in sugar, fat and calories.
11. Stamina levels:
 - a. Waiting lines to enter shelter may be long, distance from cot to restroom could be more than they can handle with a walker.
 - b. Pre-registration required for special needs shelters.
12. Items to bring to a shelter:
 - I. Closed toed shoes & clothing, including incontinence supplies, for 7+ days.
 - II. Wheelchair or walker as used at home, eyeglasses/hearing aids/dentures.
 - III. Contact information for primary medical providers and family members.
 - IV. Medications and medication list with dosage/frequency.
 - V. Items of interest, word games, knitting, etc.
13. For Shelters that accept pets, bring leash and pet collar/tag, food, medications, etc. Kennels are available and staff will enable them to get exercise.
14. List of Resources:
 - Florida Dept of Health Special Needs Shelters: Eligibility & Locations
<http://www.floridahealth.gov/%5C/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/disaster-response-resources/spns-index.html>
 - Florida Disaster Division of Emergency Management: What to Take to a Shelter, What to Expect in a Shelter, Disaster Supply Kit, Disability Planning and more.
<https://floridadisaster.org>
 - Florida Department of Health, Regional Special Needs Program Consultants (PDF):
<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/community-preparedness/spns-healthcare/documents/rspncc-contact-map.pdf>
 - National Alzheimer's Disease and Resource Center: This site includes a Disaster Plan Tool Kit
<https://nadrc.acl.gov/>