



ADVISORY

6/15/2023

2023 Coastal Storm Planning Guidance for Hospital, Nursing Home, Adult Care Facilities, Home Care, Hospice, Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities and Diagnostic and Treatment Center Providers

As the 2023 Atlantic Hurricane Season approaches, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) is providing the following pre-season preparation guidance to be reviewed by facilities in potential impact areas.

We thank you in advance for your attention to these important preparations.

General Guidance

(NOTE: not all activities apply to all provider types)

1. Prepare your facility

- a. Review plans for the loss of power and/or water; test and confirm operations of emergency generator; confirm or acquire adequate generator fuel supply is onsite for at least 96 hours and emergency lighting.
- b. Review with staff the facility evacuation and emergency response plans for flooding, including vertical, horizontal, or out of facility evacuation arrangements and protocols, applicable mutual aid plans, send/receive arrangements, and local and regional emergency contact information.
- c. Review plans for alternate staffing arrangements; shifts and management of staffing shortages due to transportation impacts; the securing of needed supplies and preparations for staff that remain on site if roadways are not passable; how to handle communications outages.
- d. Review and update patient/resident census and status by Transportation Asset Level (TALs) Categories and related transportation asset needs. TAL categories are provided in the reference section at the end of this document.
- e. Review procedures for discharge and other methods to reduce facility census if needed.
- f. Review communications plan, including primary and back-up communication systems and information for staff and outside response partners.
- g. Review plans for necessary levels of food service, water, pharmacy, medical and environmental service supplies at facility for at least 96 hours (24 hours prior to and 72 hours following the storm). This may include oxygen and medical gasses and other general supplies.
- h. Ensure you know where your eFINDS supplies, i.e., barcode scanner, wrist bands, and paper tracking logs are stored and that you will have staff available on all shifts who can use the eFINDS system (hospitals, nursing home and adult care facilities only).
- i. Confirm contact information for your local Office of Emergency Management, if the facility is in need of services or supplies. It is important to note that facilities should rely on their OEM as a backup for obtaining needed resources and should first exhaust all arrangements with their primary vendors and suppliers.
- j. Be ready to use key NYSDOH Health Commerce System (HCS) Applications for planning, data sharing,

and receipt of alerts and advisories.

- k. Assure there are staff on every shift with active HCS accounts and HCS Communications Directory Role assignment to enable your facility/agency to comply* with requests for essential data, particularly information needed to prepare for, and respond to the impact of emergency events.

Your HCS Coordinator can assign staff to the appropriate roles needed to access each of the HCS applications. See details of essential HCS applications in #4 below.

**Regulatory reporting references provided in reference section below.*

2. Prepare your staff

- a. Review plans for staffing levels, particularly plan for shift changes that may be compromised if an impending storm makes transportation routes impassable and how the facility would alert staff.
- b. Encourage staff to develop/review family disaster plans, to include pet and childcare.

3. Prepare your patients and residents

- a. Plan to communicate your plans with patients, residents and their families/caregivers.

4. Be ready to use essential HCS data applications, including:

- a. The Facility Evacuation Planning Application (hospitals, nursing homes, and adult care facilities in NYC only)
 - review and confirm existing send/receive arrangements your facility has made in the event evacuation becomes necessary.
 - The HCS Communications Directory Role that must be assigned to an individual to access the Facility Evacuation Planning Application on the HCS is: *“Facility Evacuation Planning Coordinator”*.
- b. Health Electronic Response Data System (HERDS) surveys
 - Surveys may be conducted with hospitals, adult care facilities, nursing homes, homecare agencies and hospices to collect information regarding facility status (beds available, current census, physical plant/building/supply status or needs)
 - If these surveys are activated, all facilities, both in and out of evacuation zones, MUST respond if assigned.
 - The HCS Communications Directory Roles that must be assigned to staff in the HCS Communications Directory for access to HERDS:
 - Hospitals: HERDS Data Manager, or HERDS Data Reporter, or HERDS Survey Reporter
 - Nursing Homes: Nursing Home Data Reporter
 - Adult Care Facilities: Data Reporter
 - Homecare agencies (CHHAs and LHCSAs): Administrator, Data Reporter, Director of Patient Services, Emergency Response Coordinator, and HPN Coordinator
 - Hospices: Administrator, Data Reporter, Director of Patient Services, Emergency Response Coordinator and HPN Coordinator
- c. eFINDS Patient/Resident Tracking Application (hospitals, nursing homes ACFs and ICF/IID only).

- In the event that evacuation of hospitals, nursing homes or adult care facilities becomes necessary, the NYSDOH is reminding facilities that they must use the eFINDS system to track the movement of all patients and residents between sending (evacuating) and receiving facilities.
- The HCS Communications Directory Roles that must be assigned for access to eFINDS: eFINDS Data Reporting Administrator or eFINDS Data Reporter.
- Should evacuations become necessary, the NYSDOH will send an alert to facilities to begin preparing their patients and residents with wristbands and registering their wristband barcode in the eFINDS system, and to announce the name of the Evacuation Operation to select when registering your patient/resident data into eFINDS.
- Make sure that staff who have been trained on the use of the system are available to perform this function.
- For help with eFINDS use, please send email to: efinds@health.ny.gov. eFINDS quick reference cards and self-paced training are available on the HCS. Just enter “eFINDS” in the search box on HCS, and all eFINDS help resources will be available.

References

Transportation Assistance Level Categories

TAL 1

Non-Ambulatory - Individuals unable to travel in a sitting position (e.g. require stretcher, are ventilator dependent or bariatric)

TAL 2

Wheelchair - Individuals who cannot walk on their own but are able to sit for an extended period of time

TAL 3

Ambulatory - Individuals with disabilities who are able to walk on their own without physical assistance.

Health Provider Network Access and Reporting Regulations

Hospitals and Nursing Homes

[10 NYCRR §§ 400.10](#)

Adult Care Facilities

[18 NYCRR Section 487.12\(k\).](#)

[18 NYCRR Section 488.12\(m\)](#)

[18 NYCRR Section 490.12\(k\)](#)

CHHAs, LHCSAs and Hospice

[10 NYCRR 763.11\(f\)](#)

[10 NYCRR 766.9\(o\)](#)