



HEALTH ADVISORY

Extreme Temperatures and High Humidity Across New York State July 26, 2023

Healthcare facilities should share immediately with your Emergency Departments, Urgent Care Centers, Medical Directors, Directors of Nursing, Emergency Response Coordinators, and Risk Managers

The National Weather Service is forecasting dangerous heat conditions across New York State through the end of this week, especially in the lower Hudson Valley, NYC and Long Island Regions. These conditions include extremely high temperatures and high humidity levels, especially during the afternoon into the early evening hours.

Healthcare providers should anticipate an increase in heat-related illnesses and complications among vulnerable populations.

Healthcare providers should be vigilant of symptoms of possible heat-related illnesses such as dehydration, heat cramps/exhaustion/stroke, and complications from heart and lung disease.

Homecare agencies and healthcare providers should consider reaching out to their most vulnerable patients and encouraging them and caregivers to help them stay cool and well hydrated.

New York State and Federal regulations require inpatient and residential healthcare providers to maintain comfortable and safe temperature levels within their facilities. Providers have the responsibility to remain especially vigilant during high heat conditions, to monitor the health status of their staff, patients and residents. Healthcare providers should take the necessary precautions to ensure that patients, residents, staff and visitors are comfortable and safe.

Instruct at-risk patients and their caregivers to use home air conditioners or seek cooling centers or locations that are air-conditioned such as a cooling center, mall, library or supermarket.

A list of cooling centers can be found on the [NYSDOH Cooling Center Locator](#).

More information can be found at: [NYSDOH Extreme Heat Advice](#).

Contact your county Office of Emergency Management if your facility suddenly becomes unable to regulate the interior temperature, including generator or air conditioning failures.



The following measures should also be taken by providers immediately and in general during the summer months to ensure the life-safety capabilities of their facility:

1. Immediately test all generators involved in supplying power to areas for patient care and in accordance with program regulations. Ensure that you have sufficient generator fuel on hand to cover at least the forecasted period of extreme heat.
2. If you experience cooling equipment malfunctions during normal business hours, immediately contact your service contractor and make sure to inform your NYSDOH Regional Office program.
3. Check all doors/windows to ensure that they are sealed correctly during use of cooling systems, and draw curtains or shades to limit sunlight. Encourage residents to sit away from the windows and out of direct sun.
4. Review emergency evacuation plans and ensure that they are up-to-date.
5. At residential facilities, encourage residents to stay indoors unless absolutely necessary to go outdoors during the extreme heat. If residents do go outdoors ensure they have a beverage, preferably water, with them. Residents should wear a hat or cap or carry an umbrella to shield them from the sun when outdoors. Know the whereabouts of all residents to assure they are not exposed to the heat for long periods.
6. Frequently offer cold fluids/beverages to patients and residents to avoid heat illness.
7. People without homes or others seeking temporary relief may present to your hospital or nursing home.

NOTE: Although hospital personnel are not required to perform a medical screen on these individuals on the basis of these circumstances alone, if an individual presents to the hospital ED complaining of or exhibiting symptoms of heat-related illness, medical screening must be completed to rule out emergency medical conditions in accordance with normal operating procedures.

8. If a patient who does not have a home is ready to be discharged during the high heat conditions, please follow your facility's standard policies and procedures to ensure a safe and appropriate discharge for the individual and work with appropriate partner organizations to ensure that they have transport to available housing or an emergency shelter/cooling center.
9. If the individual does not have heat-related condition but wishes to remain in a public area of the hospital to stay to stay cool, please allow them to do so. Check with your local emergency management office for locations and hours of cooling centers in your county and offer this list to the individual so they are aware of options if needed.
10. Nursing homes may also experience individuals seeking shelter from the heat, and should review their plans regarding reception and treatment of such individuals per 10 NYCRR 415.26, which requires such plans in response to "...an internal or external emergency resulting from natural or man-made causes including but not limited to ... severe weather..." and ensure that individuals are provided immediate necessary care for relief, and then sent for any further emergency care that is necessary.