Medical Facility Emergency Planning Considerations in Lincoln County

This document is intended to be a helpful resource for medical facilities in Lincoln County to assist in the emergency/disaster planning process. Lincoln County routinely assesses hazards and vulnerabilities for planning and preparedness purposes. The below list includes the top ten hazards in the County based on the most recent assessment. This list is not a complete picture of all the hazards in Lincoln County, but an all-hazards approach to planning is best.

**Top 10 Hazards in Lincoln County, NC**

1. Winter Storm 6. Resource Shortage (Water/Fuel)

2. Thunderstorm – Wind 7. Tornado

3. Flooding 8. Communications Systems Disruption/Failure

4. Energy/Power/Utility Failure 9. Transportation Incident

5. HazMat Incidents 10. Nuclear Facility

**Be Facility and Community Specific**

This list of hazards for Lincoln County is a broad foundation to begin an all-hazards approach to facility planning, but it is also important to consider facility-specific hazards. Power outages, missing clients/residents, and evacuations are just three examples of an almost limitless list of hazards or events that should be taken into consideration when planning and preparing for emergencies at medical facilities. When planning, consider the risks of your facility, in addition to the local community in which the facility exists. Some examples of this kind of risk include proximity to flood-prone areas or nearby facilities where hazardous materials are stored. In addition to planning for hazards, a facility must plan for notifying not only emergency officials but also key staff and personnel who may be essential to the continuous operations of a facility during and after an emergency. Frequent updates of contact information can ensure the best information possible.

**Use a Team Approach**

It is important to engage facility staff and to use a team approach to planning. This team approach allows the planning process to draw on experience and documented facility-specific hazards that need to be taken into consideration when preparing for emergencies and disasters. Additionally, a hazard vulnerability assessment tool can be used by your planning team to quantify risks based on facts, experience, and documented events.

**Community Partnership and Training**

An essential part of the planning/preparedness process is building relationships with those agencies and individuals that will support your facility’s emergency plans and procedures. Relationships fostered before an emergency or disaster with local healthcare preparedness coalitions, emergency management, and first responders can prove vital during an actual emergency. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services preparedness regulations require regular emergency exercises to test plans and document gaps and opportunities for improvement. Information on opportunities to be involved in joint or shared exercises and inclusion in databases to receive pertinent preparedness information can be accessed through the Metrolina Healthcare Preparedness Coalition and Lincoln County Emergency Management. Contact information for both organizations is below. The sharing of knowledge, accessibility to resources and qualified personnel, and a better understanding of how processes work during an emergency are just a few benefits from being involved in multi-agency exercises and information sharing.

Lincoln County Emergency Management

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**Additional Planning Considerations**

**Sheltering**

In Lincoln County, some locations have been pre-identified as shelters for displaced or evacuated citizens during an emergency or disaster. This list of shelters is not published and is managed by the American Red Cross along with other partner agencies. Shelters are opened and selected based on the proximity of the shelter to the affected population and any incident-specific needs. Emergency Management and the Joint Information System will work to make the locations of any open/available shelter as accessible as possible during an emergency or disaster; however, shelters are intended for use by the general population and may not be appropriate for individuals from medical facilities that need specific equipment and care. If an incident necessitates sheltering in place, be prepared by having provisions for patients/clients and staff members as well as pre-identified areas that are suitable for sheltering in place. Ideally, an interior room with as many walls as you can get between the occupants and the outside would be best for sheltering in place. It is also important to choose an area that can be somewhat sealed off from the outside in the event the outdoor air quality is the reason for sheltering in place.

**Transportation**

During an emergency or disaster, the transportation staff and or patients that may need to be relocated or evacuated is of paramount importance and is the responsibility of the facility. In the planning process and before an emergency, identify means of transportation that may be used during an emergency to assist in getting patients to a relocation site or shelter or staff to the facility if roads are not easily passable. You can accomplish this by researching local transportation providers with access to vans and buses that can accommodate the needs of the clients, patients, and staff of your organization and establish contracts or retainers for their services during an emergency or disaster. Local government has very few resources for transportation that will likely not be available and not adequate to assist in transporting patients from a medical facility during an emergency or disaster.

**Emergency Power Needs**

The need for an alternate source of electrical power is extremely important, and you need to plan for it in advance of an emergency. If the facility does not have an on-site generator(s) that are adequate to support the critical electrical power needs of all patients and clients, consider identifying and contracting with vendors that can provide services to fill that need. In addition to pre-identifying generator providers, it is essential to have proper connections installed in locations that are where a generator can be hooked up and not interfere with entries, exits, and the air quality of the facility.

**Stay informed**

Another important piece of the preparedness puzzle is ensuring your organization/facility stays up to date with the community and local preparedness efforts and opportunities. Additionally, the Lincoln Emergency Alert Notification is a great tool to receive public safety alerts from local emergency officials and even weather alerts. The system allows subscribers to receive texts, phone calls and emails with pertinent safety information. Go to the Lincoln County’s website to sign up.

<http://www.lincolncounty.org/>