May 28, 2020

To Agency Regulated Health Care Providers:

Given the impact the COVID-19 public health emergency is likely to have on your hurricane preparedness plans, please take action now to verify contracts, confirm arrangements for services and evacuation plans, and take actions to modify your plans to address COVID-19 risks for your residents and others. Hurricane Season begins on June 1, 2020, so it is imperative that your facility act quickly to ensure any necessary modifications in plans are in place. If the facility expects to have any gaps or needs during an evacuation, it is vital to let your County Emergency Management know as soon as possible. Below is a checklist of items for consideration.

> **Confirm your evacuation locations remain viable.**
>   - ***Ensure you have confirmed agreements with your receiving facility (evacuation destination) since May 1, 2020, to verify the agreements remain viable.***
>   - Will the destination you have planned allow isolation (private rooms) and/or cohorting of any positive cases you may have at the time of evacuation with dedicated staff?
>   - Have you considered sending your COVID-positive residents to a separate location with your dedicated staff to allow appropriate separation?
>   - Have you made plans for alternative options if your original evacuation sites cancel at the last minute? Alternative options may include facilities such as a hotel, church or school. Consider these options now; do not wait until your plans fail. If you choose an alternative evacuation site, define all the arrangements you will need to accommodate including the need to transport beds, supplies, equipment, PPE and others. Determine the emergency power options at the site including generator support and cooling equipment.

> **Confirm your transportation plans.**
>   - ***Confirm transportation including arrangements for confirmed or suspected COVID-19 residents with the transportation provider.***
>   - How will you handle transportation of any COVID cases? How will you ensure residents with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 do not share transportation with non-COVID residents?
>   - Have you confirmed agreements with your transportation providers for evacuation since May 1 to ensure the agreements remain viable?

➢ **Evaluate timing of evacuation.**
- Will changes to your evacuation plans result in earlier movement of residents than usual?
- If you have a plan to move confirmed or suspected COVID-positive residents to a different location than the rest of your residents, do these residents and their dedicated staff need to move sooner?

➢ **Considerations for evacuee receiving facilities.**
- If you are a receiving facility, ensure you can accommodate residents who will evacuate to your facilities.
- Are you able to cohort confirmed or suspected COVID-19 positive residents from others and provide proper space for social distancing?
- During a power outage will your cooled space (generator supported) support your residents as well as evacuees?
- How will cohorting impact your use of this cooled space?

➢ **Ensure emergency power and cooling devices in place.**
- *Evaluate your generator and cooling device support.*
- *Confirm any re-fueling arrangements for generators remain intact.*
- Can you maintain isolation and distancing requirements with your emergency power plans?

➢ **Review Infection Prevention and Control Plans.**
- *Ensure you have appropriate PPE supplies to take in an evacuation to include all PPE needed for Standard Precautions and residents on any Transmission-based precautions (contact, droplet).*
- *Include the PPE and means for disposal (trash cans, bags) and hand hygiene supplies.*
- *Facilities with COVID-19 positive cases must continue to follow CDC PPE recommendations.*
- *Facilities with no COVID-19 positive cases must continue to follow CDC PPE recommendations, ensure residents and staff continue to wear masks, and staff wear gloves when providing care.*

➢ **Assess onsite supplies.**
- *Ensure onsite supplies for sheltering in place for an extended period of at least 72 hours.*
- Given the ability for facilities to shelter in place due to generator support at nursing homes and assisted living facilities, it is essential to review your sheltering plans and secure sufficient amounts of food, water, and other necessary supplies to support your sheltering plans.

➢ **Evaluate viability of hurricane shelters.**
- Generally, no licensed health care facilities should plan to take residents to an emergency shelter during an evacuation. Each facility must have agreements with an appropriate location for evacuations approved by the local emergency operation

officials. However, in some cases small facilities have an approved plan to evacuate residents and staff to an emergency shelter.

- If a small assisted living facility or adult family care home has an approved CEMP plan to go to a shelter for evacuation, other options should be considered immediately, and alternative arrangements made with the goal of limiting exposure to others. Please contact your county emergency management officials to discuss options.

➢ **Review and update the Emergency Status System (ESS).**
- *Review entries for evacuation location and transportation to ensure current arrangements are entered.*
- *Enter and verify emergency generator information including contact information for appropriate plant management staff.*
- *Verify current facility contacts and phone numbers/emails. Make sure all mobile phone numbers are accurate and reflect the current administrator information.*

Bolded items must be completed by your facility. Following your assessment, your facility is required to immediately list the changes you have made to your plan to accommodate COVID-19 and report these modifications to your local Emergency Management Agency: https://www.floridadisaster.org/counties/

Sincerely,

Laura MacLafferty, Bureau Chief
Bureau of Health Facility Regulation
Division of Health Quality Assurance