



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Office of Health Care Quality

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Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

**TRANSMITTAL**

TO: Dialysis Treatment Center Providers

FROM: Nancy B. Grimm, RN, JD *NBG*  
Director, Office of Health Care Quality

DATE: June 24, 2011

RE: Weather Related Disaster Plans

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During severe weather events, it is essential for you to have specific weather-related disaster plans in place for notifying, tracking and providing services for patients who regularly receive care at your facility. If your facility has an existing disaster plan, you should evaluate the effectiveness of the plan, at least annually, and update it as necessary to determine opportunities for improvement, current appropriateness and feasibility.

Some recommendations for creating or improving your facility's weather-related disaster plan include:

- Conduct drills or mock emergencies (at least annually) in order to determine the staff's skill level/educational needs and effectiveness of the plan.
- Contact and develop an ongoing relationship with the local disaster management agency to ensure that the agency is aware of dialysis facility needs in the event of an emergency. This relationship will help expedite restoration of interrupted services due to an emergency or disaster. There should be documented evidence of this contact.
- Collaborate with your End Stage Renal Dialysis (ESRD) Network, suppliers, utility service providers and your state agencies for survey and emergency preparedness information as well as with other dialysis facilities in order to ensure the availability of life saving dialysis services in the event of an emergency or disaster. Resources are available from the Kidney Community Emergency Response (KCER) Coalition, which can assist facilities in meeting this requirement.



- Identify a leader within your facility who can head the facility's emergency preparation and response activities.
- Make a specific plan to secure and protect your equipment, supplies and records.
- Create a list of emergency phone numbers for your staff and patients.
- Have an emergency plan for your patients (for example – provide them with a copy of their last “run” sheet – a list of their medications, an emergency diet, and facility or corporate phone numbers.
- Inform your ESRD Network if your facility is open and able to provide dialysis in a safe environment or if the facility is closed.
- Encourage patients to: 1) create an emergency supply kit; 2) update medication and allergy lists and keep it with them at all times; 3) talk to the health care team about the facility's emergency care plan, including how to contact the facility in the event of an emergency or disaster, where alternate care can be obtained, and how to obtain copies of vital medical records (many facilities have toll-free numbers to call for assistance); 4) maintain a record of the facility name, physician name and emergency contact information; 5) create a plan for alternate transportation to and from the dialysis facility; 6) obtain a list of dialysis facilities in the area; 7) follow physician's advice regarding diet and water during a disaster; 8) follow the same frequency for dialysis services, whenever possible.
- During a disaster, services may be more difficult to find so it is critical that an alternate plan is in place for your patients prior to a weather-related disaster.

If you have questions regarding this information, please contact the following Office of Health Care Quality Program Managers - Barbara Fagan at [bfagan@dhhm.state.md.us](mailto:bfagan@dhhm.state.md.us) or 410-402-8041 or Michael Cook at [mcook@dhhm.state.md.us](mailto:mcook@dhhm.state.md.us) or 410-420-8181.