

# **Franklin-Williamson Co. Respiratory Emergency Planning Committee Mtg (REPC)**

**8/13/09**

## **CHALLENGES**

### **Home Medical Equipment Businesses (HMEB):**

- Several factors influence whether customers with respiratory issues adopt emergency back-up measures for their respiratory equipment in power outage situations. Some of these factors include lack of financial resources and little motivation to do so. In general, most HMEBs seem to have some plan in place for providing equipment preparedness information.
- In certain situations, HMEBs may have difficulties in getting equipment and supplies to resupply customers in major power outage.
- Transporting medical equipment can be difficult if, for instance, road debris or flooding is an issue.

### **Emergency Management Agencies (EMAs):**

- Most of the special needs-based calls EMAs received during the May storm/power outage were respiratory-related (i.e., CPAP and oxygen).
- EMAs are unable to provide businesses with generators during a power outage.
- Work needs to continue in identifying special needs populations and consequently creating, developing and improving adequate emergency plans.

### **Hospitals:**

- During the May power outage, hospitals experienced an influx of people seeking a variety of medical and non-medical support, which at times became very disruptive in their work in providing medical care to hospital patients. Many of the people arriving at hospitals did not need medical care, just electricity.

### **Little Egypt American Red Cross (ARC):**

- Little Egypt ARC responded to a wide range of needs/requests during the May storm. With their region spanning across all of southern Illinois. ARC responded to local needs/requests, despite their own restrictions from the power outage, e.g., limited communication, limited office functions, etc.

## RECOMMENDATIONS/ACTIONS

### HMEBs:

- Provide Ronda at Franklin-Williamson Bi-County Health Department (FWBCHD) with a copy of your educational material. If you would, please write any verbal information you routinely provide as well.
- Provide Ronda with a general description of your power outage policies/procedures/plans.
- If you have other policies/procedures/plans relating to other emergencies, e.g., earthquake, flood, etc. please also provide Ronda with a general description of these.
- Upon receipt of the ARC/FEMA multi-jurisdictional, multi-agency release form, please review the form and make suggestions on it may be adapted to relate better to respiratory clients.
- Begin a discussion with key internal stakeholders about the benefits of working with local emergency response agencies, especially EMAs. Discuss the importance of providing limited client data to EMAs in order to better communicate with and coordinate emergency response issues for your clients.
- If your business is willing to consider sharing certain client data, include the ARC/FEMA release of information that customers may sign, allowing your business to share information with EMAs can use this data, particularly in special needs planning, and would help in identifying a segment of special needs populations (those with respiratory issues) that may not currently be reached through existing Franklin-Williamson Special Needs Assessment Panel (FW-SNAP) emergency planning.
- Also discuss internally the hospitals' proposal about HMEBs working cooperatively with other equipment suppliers in an emergency, like the cooperative relationship Heartland Regional and Herrin Hospitals have during emergencies. HMEBs and their clients would benefit in the pulling of local resources during emergencies.
- As these internal discussion take place, please capture any additional thoughts or suggestions, especially those relating to community-based emergency planning. Please keep your thoughts and suggestions. We can schedule a follow-up meeting if there is a need to discuss any of these issues in depth.
- In order to include other HMEBs, not present at the meeting, Ronda will be providing a list of the HMEBs that she currently has. If you would, please review and let her know if there are other HMBE's or associated organizations that should be included in our community discussion.
- Allocating funds for a back-up generator for your business is a very good use of money.
- Communicate with local EMAs when you become aware that you will be exhausting critical supplies and you have no ability to secure life-saving resources.

### EMAs:

- Discuss internally and identify important information that may be obtained from customers with respiratory conditions that would be helpful for EMAs in county planning and response.
- Upon receipt of the ARC/FEMA release of information form, please review and make suggestions on how to adapt the form to apply to respiratory clients (already suggested power and water companies to be identified).
- EMAs are to pull May storm records, in particular special needs calls, and forward to SIU, Rehabilitation Institute, Dr. D. Shane Koch, [dskoch@siu.edu](mailto:dskoch@siu.edu) so he and his team can review and

analyze these records. I believe they will be able to provide a summary that may be helpful in our continuing planning.

- Work with FWBCHD and other response agencies in determining short and long-term respiratory-based emergency planning issues.

### **Hospitals:**

- Discuss internally and identify important power outage hospital issues. Provide Ronda with recommendations on how these issues can be addressed through county planning.
- Upon receipt of the ARC/FEMA release of information form, please review and make suggestions on how to adapt to respiratory clients.
- Work with FWBCHD and other response agencies in determining short and long-term issues related with the REPC.

### **ARC:**

- Search for the ARC/FEMA release of information form and provide any comments on how form might be adapted for respiratory clients. Provide form Ronda, EMAs, and hospitals. (EMAs have initially requested that individual's power and water companies be identified.)
- Review ARC power outage response and identify issues/important information that can be shared with and addressed by the REPC.
- Work with FWBCHD and other response agencies in determining short and long-term issues related with the REPC.

### **Franklin-Williamson Bi-County Health Department:**

- Ronda will type meeting notes and share with REPC.
- Ronda will pull a few previous SNAP meeting minutes and forward to HMEBs, along with an invitation to attend the next SNAP meeting on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. The September meeting will meet at Franklin Hospital, in their board room. Quarterly SNAP meetings alternate between Franklin and Williamson counties.
- Ronda will share REPC contact information with everyone, and provide periodic updates.
- Ronda will receive, review, and conduct a content analysis of HMEB emergency preparedness literature.
- Ronda will receive, review and conduct a content analysis of HMEB power outage emergency policies/procedures/plans.
- Ronda will receive, review and conduct a content analysis of other HMEB emergency policies/procedures/plans.
- Upon receipt, Ronda will forward the ARC/FEMA release of information form to HMEBs for review and comment.
- Ronda will establish a follow-up meeting with county emergency response agencies, after agencies have had time to review and discuss internal policy and power outage/other emergency issues. This responder meeting will focus on information sharing, next steps, and setting of goals.
- Ronda will work with SIUC Rehabilitation Institute to contact national respiratory-based advocacy organizations to seek additional input and assistance.

## **FUTURE PLANNING INFO DISCUSSED IN INITIAL REPC MEETING**

- People with life-dependent equipment need to immediately notify their home medical supplier in a power outage
- Last resort-location of ARC and ARC-associated shelters – outline conditions for contact.
- ARC has 6 – extra large beds; Fox, and possibly SISA, indicated they had extra large beds, too? Add info to Special Needs Annex.
- Oxygen providers with liquid oxygen tanks can fill smaller tanks from larger tanks.
- EMS did some checking of home oxygen patients during storm.
- EMAs stated that it would be better if HMEBs could contact the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) early in the process, before the issue becomes critical, when noticing a potential shortage in oxygen or other life-saving medical supplies/equipment.
- Heartland plans to discuss the possibility of utilizing their business building in an emergency as an alternate site, possibly to be used for public/community-based needs. Temporary, back-up generator considerations are being looked into for this building.
- Issue of concern for hospitals when discharging patient with no electricity at home.
- Responder meeting – discuss utility in Map Your Neighborhood (MYN) program to address special needs – use in outreach/education campaign?
- Would it help EMAs/SNAP/special needs response if HMEBs’ client lists had most critical individuals indicated?
- Can anything be done to address “tank hoarders?”
- Would it be helpful to have HMEBs proactively call most critical clients during emergencies, if possible?
- Hospitals were okay with assisting people with CPAP machines, but will only accept if they do not require medical assistance.
- Hospital issues of concern -- people with CPAP, oxygen needs, or other needs were just dropped off at hospitals.
- Some individuals with CPAP needs were referred to Marion Senior Citizens Center.
- What is the capacity of the Marion Senior Citizens Center, 40-50 cots?
- How do HMEBs secure important supplies, equipment? What do they do when critical supplies run out?
- Methodist and Catholic churches – Parish nurses – Parish nurse camp. Possible Health Dept. vols.