

# **Franklin-Williamson Respiratory Support/Power Outage Community Protocol**

## **A part of the Franklin and Williamson Counties' (Illinois) Emergency Operation Plans**

### **A. People Who Rely On Power-Operated Equipment**

#### **Scope of Responsibility:**

People who rely on power-operated medical equipment:

- are **ultimately responsible** for planning and taking action to ensure their health/medical needs are sustained during a power disruption or outage.
- should discuss with their Home Medical Equipment Company (HMEC) how to operate their power-operated medical equipment, including how to sustain usage in a power disruption or outage, and alternate power sources that are available to them.
- should direct any needs arising from the use of power-operated medical equipment during a power disruption/outage or other disaster/emergency to the HMEC.

#### **Preparedness Actions:**

- **Review the “BREATHE Easier In Power Outage Emergencies” handout.**
- **Complete the “BREATHE Easier in Power Outage Emergencies” preparedness magnet.**
- Review and discuss how the operation of power-operated medical equipment can be sustained in a power outage with the HMEC provider. Review various alternate power options and, if needed, discuss pricing, insurance coverage, and whether payment plan options may be available with the HMEC provider for back-up power sources.
- Select and acquire alternate power sources to back-up power-operated medical equipment.
- Most electricity utility providers have a medical equipment registry for people with medical conditions (a note from a physician is usually required). Although these registries don't guarantee priority power restoration, it may help. Contact the electricity utility provider ASAP to discuss and explore this option.
- Compile and store at least three-day's worth of emergency supplies, e.g., food, water, first aid kit and other important items. Include any medical equipment supplies and medication in kit.
- HMECs are clients' first and foremost point of contact in power disruptions/outages or other disasters emergencies. Discuss with the HMEC provider their emergency plans for client support and ensure that they provide the following emergency information:
  - HMEC's business-hours and after-hours emergency call center phone numbers

- HMEC's local and out-of-area cell phone (business and after-hour numbers)
- Names of primary and secondary HMEC provider case managers for each client
- **Notify the HMEC if no longer needing their services or if there has been a change in address and/or phone number.**
- Seek out and designate support people who can help in maintaining use of power-operated medical equipment if there is a power disruption and/or outage. Select at least two, or more, local support contacts, and at least two out-of-area contacts. Have some of these contact numbers be cell phone numbers with texting capability, which may be available when other communication systems are unavailable or overloaded. Ideally, some or all of these support contacts should have generator power and/or current electrical power.

**Response:**

- In power disruptions and/or outages, people who rely on power-operated medical equipment should monitor local news media reports on affected areas and the anticipated length of service disruption/outage, if possible.
- In power disruptions and/or outages, people who rely on power-operated medical equipment should first utilize the alternate power sources they pre-identified and secured for themselves.
- If unable to sustain operation of power-operated medical equipment with alternate power sources, determine if electrical service is disrupted on a short-term basis or if it's an extended power outage.
- If a disruption (short-term), determine if it's possible to manage without a few hours of electricity. If the answer is no, then reach out to local support contacts to seek assistance. If need is critical, and all earlier steps were taken, contact the HMEC provider for assistance.
- If a power outage (long-term):
  - Contact local supports first and if unable to sustain self-sufficiency, explore the option of staying with out-of-area support contacts **(In these instances, notify the HMEC provider if relocating to your out-of-area support network).**
  - If staying with an out-of-area support contact is not a viable option, next step is to contact the HMEC provider. The HMEC provider, if needed, may contact the County/City Emergency Management Agency for assistance.