



GREATER NEW YORK HEALTH CARE FACILITIES ASSOCIATION

519 Eighth Avenue, 16th Floor, New York, NY, 10018

Phone: 212-643-2828 Fax: 212-643-2956 www.gnyhcfa.org



Memo 24-14

To: Administrator, DNS, Medical Director, Director of Engineering, All Department Heads and QA Committee

From: Mary Gracey-White RN, Director of Regulatory Compliance

Date: June 17, 2024

Re: Heat Advisory

With the summer season starting and the predicted elevated temperatures this week, please review your facility policies and procedures for the prevention of heat emergencies. Key areas of focus include:

- Test all generators involved in supplying power to areas for resident care. Ensure that you have sufficient generator fuel on hand to cover at least the period of extreme heat. Monitor temperatures on nursing units, particularly on hot, humid days.
- Use air circulating and air-cooling equipment (window fans, floor fans, mechanical ventilation systems and air conditioners) to achieve and maintain air movement and air cooling within the facility, especially in resident rooms and resident use areas. Protect against temperature elevations within the facility by closing window blinds and shades on sun exposed walls.
- If you experience cooling equipment malfunctions during normal business hours, immediately contact your service contractor and make sure to inform your NYSDOH Regional Office program. For malfunctions that occur on nights, weekends, or holidays, after contacting your contractor, be sure to contact the NYSDOH Duty Officer at 1-866-881-2809 and inform them of the problem. In the situation where air conditioning equipment has failed, individual room temperatures should be frequently monitored.
- If facilities need assistance and have exhausted all normal channels of assistance through vendors or contractors, they should contact their County Office of Emergency Management as a backup for assistance and resources.
- Check all doors/windows are sealed correctly during use of cooling systems and draw curtains or shades to limit sunlight. Encourage residents to sit away from the windows and direct sun.
- Review heat emergency plans to ensure they are current, complete, and known to all staff.
- Encourage residents to stay indoors unless necessary to go **outdoors during the extreme heat**. If residents do go outdoors ensure they have a beverage, preferably water, with

them. Residents should use sunscreen and wear a hat or cap and be in a shaded area. Know the whereabouts of all residents to assure residents are not exposed to the heat for extended periods.

- Frequently offer cold fluids/beverages to patients and residents to avoid heat illness.
- Alert staff to monitor residents for the signs and symptoms of heat illness. Notify the physician of such observations and obtain medical services if needed.
- Adjust menus as needed, incorporating items such as cold plates, salads, etc. Consult with your dietician.
- Review resident medications and identify those that may cause residents to become more susceptible to heat and sunlight.
- Facility staff can experience heat stress issues especially when wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) if required. Facilities should ensure staff have opportunities for required breaks and for hydration and provide education about heat-related illness and first aid procedures.
- Additionally, the summer is also a high-risk season for residents with a history of wandering behavior and **risk for elopement. Staff/Receptionist/Security should remain vigilant and immediately notify the RN Supervisory of any observed “exit-seeking behavior” – this includes ongoing restlessness and agitation, verbal expression of desire to leave and actual attempts to leave the unit/facility.**

Please post/share this information and provide staff and resident education on heat emergencies including those outlined in the attached 2024 NYS DOH Heat Advisory. GNYHCFA will be participating in a call this afternoon with NYSDOH regarding the upcoming heat wave and will provide additional information as received.

As always contact the Association if you have any further questions.