

GREATER NEW YORK HEALTH CARE FACILITIES ASSOCIATION

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Memo 24-34

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

From: Mary Gracey-White, Director of Regulatory Compliance

Date: December 12, 2024

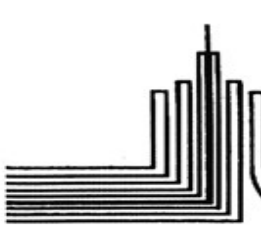
Re: Winter Weather Preparedness Winter Season 2024-2025

The NYSDOH has issued Winter Storm Season 2024-2025 guidance for Health Care Facilities (see attached). In advance of a Winter Weather event, leadership staff should review their Emergency Response and Evacuation Plans to ensure procedures are up to date and all staff are educated. Please ensure that contact information for all key staff and partners is current. Additionally, plans for adequate staffing should be reviewed and should include the following:

- Necessary notifications and alerts to All staff,
- Adjustments of shifts and management of staffing shortages due to transportation impacts,
- Securing needed supplies and preparations for staff that remain on site if roadways are not passable,
- Process for bringing in and housing additional staff period to a storm to ensure sufficient coverage during the storm event and recovery period.
- Emergency power including generator testing
- Every provider must ensure that all computers and network infrastructure necessary for disaster response are supported by generator power.

As per regulation, fuel supplies for generators and food preparation should be checked and additional fuel brought in to ensure that it is adequate to cover operations for the 24-hour period leading up to a storm and for at least 72 hours following a storm. Enough supplies of food, potable water, clean linens, and other necessary general items should be available for the same time period without dependence on delivery from suppliers.

In the event of winter storms facilities impacted by power outages or other storm impacts should make requests for assistance through their local county Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or should contact their county OEM if the EOC is not activated. Those providers located within the five (5) boroughs of NYC who need services or supplies, should contact NYC Emergency Management.



Critical Health Commerce System (HCS) Applications Used During Emergencies:

Providers need to ensure they have staff with active (current password) HCS accounts, who are assigned to the roles (indicated below) in the HCS Communications Directory:

- **The HCS Communications Directory** – assure that all business and emergency contact information for key facility, administrative staff is up to date in the HCS Communications Directory. This contact information is the main data source used by the NYSDOH alerting and notification system for sending emergency and informational notifications to providers and conducting one on one communications and discussions where needed. If this data is not up to date, providers may not receive key information. The HCS Communications Directory role that has access to make role assignments for their facility is the HPN Coordinator.
- **The Health Electronic Response Data System (HERDS)** – HERDS surveys may need to be conducted to capture important information regarding a provider's status during an emergency and providers must be able to respond to any survey that might be activated.
- **The HCS Communications Directory Roles** that enable staff to access HERDS include HERDS Data Manager, HERDS Data Reporter, HERDS Survey Reporter, Administrator, HPN Coordinator.
- **eFINDS Patient and Resident Tracking application:** All nursing homes should ensure that their eFINDS supplies are available (i.e., barcode scanner, wrist bands, and paper tracking logs) and that staff who have been trained on the use of the system are ready and available to perform this function on all shifts. **Staff should be trained to use eFINDS even in the event of a power outage and loss of internet connectivity.** If facilities need assistance with eFINDS use, please send email to: efinds@health.ny.gov.

Please contact the Association if you need further information.