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*Better Health Care for all Floridians*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Agency Urges Health Care Facilities to Verify Information in Emergency Status System**

**Tallahassee, Fla.** – In preparation for the June 1 start of hurricane season, the Agency for Health Care Administration (Agency) is reminding health care facilities to enroll and verify their information in the Emergency Status System (ESS). Health care providers can easily access the ESS at <http://ess.myflorida.com/> from any Internet access point, including from their smart phones.

“It is vital that facilities and providers are able to communicate their status and any needs to the Agency in a timely manner during and immediately following an emergency,” said Secretary Liz Dudek. “It is also important for all facilities to know their local emergency management office—that should be their first point of contact if they have an emergency situation.”

In addition to participating in the ESS, the Agency is encouraging facilities to make the following preparations now before a storm is looming:

- **Vendors** – Contact all vendors to assure they will follow through on agreements for transportation, fuel, water and other supplies. Consider arrangements with multiple vendors for back up purposes.
- **Generators** – Test all emergency generators and verify it is in good working order.
- **Fuel** – Make sure all fuel tanks are full. Make arrangements for refueling as needed for up to seven days.
- **Special Needs** – If patients/residents have special needs, know and be able to pass those needs and necessary supplies to the receiving facilities. Arrangements should include sufficient staff to attend to the patients/residents at the receiving facilities.
- **Water Systems** – Water is often polluted and/or unreliable after a storm. Stock bottled water or large tanks of water now. Assume the need for a seven-day supply.
- **Food** – Have sufficient food on hand for a seven-day period for both residents and staff with arrangements to replenish.
- **Batteries** – Pre-stock batteries for necessary equipment including smoke alarms, hearing aids, IV pumps, portable phones, vital sign equipment and electrical tapes.
- **Vehicles** – Make sure all facility vehicles are in good working order, fueled, and ready to transport when needed. Obtain any needed specialty licenses (e.g. bus driver) in advance.
- **Oxygen** – For patients/residents with oxygen needs, have sufficient oxygen supply for up to seven days with arrangements to replenish. Plan ahead for those with chronic pulmonary conditions.
- **Evacuation** – Contact evacuation receiving facilities and transportation vendors to make certain any existing plans are still viable. Check with the receiving facility before a storm to ensure there is compatibility of wander guard or secure care systems. Consider a secondary evacuation plan in



case the initial planned area is affected and a secondary location must be considered. Discuss who will be responsible for food, medications, supplies, etc., before a storm requires an evacuation.

- **Loss of Power** – Assure an appropriate plan for loss of power before, during, and after a storm, taking into account temperature levels and access to necessary supplies, services and staffing.
- **Review Emergency Management Plans** – Check current emergency management plans to assure they are up-to-date.
- **Enroll in the Florida Health Information Exchange Direct Secure Messaging Service** – Direct Secure Messaging (DSM) service is an encrypted email service that offers a secure way for providers to communicate and electronically transmit protected health information to others involved in patient care and emergency operations. Email [FLHII@ahca.myflorida.com](mailto:FLHII@ahca.myflorida.com) to learn more about participating in DSM.

The Agency also sent a [letter](#) to all providers on May 6 regarding ESS and hurricane preparedness. For more information on emergency preparedness resources visit:

[http://ahca.myflorida.com/MCHQ/Emergency\\_Activities/index.shtml](http://ahca.myflorida.com/MCHQ/Emergency_Activities/index.shtml).

*The Agency for Health Care Administration is committed to better health care for all Floridians. The Agency administers Florida's Medicaid program, licenses and regulates more than 45,000 health care facilities and 37 health maintenance organizations, and publishes health care data and statistics at [www.FloridaHealthFinder.gov](http://www.FloridaHealthFinder.gov). Additional information about Agency initiatives is available via [Facebook \(AHCAFlorida\)](#), [Twitter \(@AHCA\\_FL\)](#) and [YouTube \(/AHCAFlorida\)](#).*

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