

Challenges & Best Practices Of Emergency Managers

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Objectives

- Identify and clarify the term “Special Needs Population”.
- Discuss some of the challenges we face as Emergency Managers in dealing with these special populations.
- What role does HIPPA play?
- The realities of MOU’s.
- Discuss some of the best practices used by Emergency Managers.

What, Exactly, Is A “Special Needs Population”

- A special needs population may consist of persons who fit any one or combination of the following categories:
 - Someone who has disabilities
 - Someone who lives in an institutionalized setting
 - Someone who is elderly
 - Someone from a diverse culture
 - Someone with limited English proficiency or who is non-English speaking
 - Someone who is a child
 - Someone who is transportation disadvantaged

Or, Could It Be...

- An individual who meets the following criteria:
 - Is unable to make sheltering arrangements on their own, AND
 - Is not acutely ill, AND
 - Has one or more medical and/or psychiatric conditions that require a level of medical care or assistance that exceeds what a general shelter is able to provide.

Virginia Department of Health (VDH) State Managed Shelter – Public Health and Medical Services Plan,
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- Some examples of a “Special Needs Population” may include:
 - Nursing Home/Assisted Living Facility
 - Elderly
 - Alzheimer's Care
 - Emotional/Physical Impairment
 - Daycare Center (Child or Adult)
 - Incarcerated individuals (Juvenile or Adult)
 - Residential Treatment Facilities
 - Migrant Populations
 - Seasonal or year round
 - Documented or Undocumented
 - Homeless
 - Rural settings without mass/public transit system
 - Homebound medical machine dependant patients

How Do These Definitions Challenge You As An Emergency Manager

- Do you know how many of these “facilities” there are in your locality?
- Where can you find this information?
- How do you identify unlicensed facilities and transient populations?
- Of those, who are required by licensing regulations to have a plan, how many actually do?
 - If the facility has a plan are they willing to share it with you. Or, do you meet resistance?
 - If you receive a copy of the plan, how do you exercise it to test its effectiveness?

What Role Does HIPPA Play?

- How can you obtain information about a population so that you can assist appropriately with their planning effort if the facility isn't willing to share the medical nature or condition(s) of its residents?
- What right do you have to this information?

The Reality Of MOU's

- Frederick County has a local charter bus company.
- After reviewing several facility plans (of varying natures) it became evident that ALL (100%) of the plans had an arrangement/MOU with this one charter company for use of their busses in the event of an emergency requiring evacuation.
- On a routine basis this charter company has 2 available busses at their site (not already committed to tours, etc.).

- Most of these same facilities have agreements or MOUs with one of two food service providers.
 - When the feces strike the rotating oscillator...what priority will these facilities truly be? #1, #20, #100
- As the locality Emergency Manager, what support services and supplies should you anticipate needing to provide through SMA or EMAC when needs can't be met by the MOU's currently in place?

Best Practices

- Be creative:
 - With the current budgetary restrictions most of us are facing, how can you find help – FOR FREE!
 - High School Government Service Learning Programs
 - College Interns
 - Graduate Students
 - CERT Team Members
 - These groups can perform manpower intensive functions which will provide you with more detailed information about facility location, census, plan status.

- Partner with those who perform inspections of the licensed facilities:
 - Social Services
 - Health Department
 - Fire Marshal
- Partner with faith based and non-governmental agencies who provide services such as:
 - Free lunches/dinners
 - Meals on Wheels
 - Last Resort Sheltering (i.e. Salvation Army)
 - Transportation
- These are the groups who can help you identify populations which are not easily counted.

- Work with organizations within your locality who provide support services to people with physical disabilities:
 - Advocacy groups
 - Special Needs registries
 - Translators (foreign language as well as sign language)
- The more familiar these groups are with you, your efforts and your intentions the less likely they are to feel “stigmatized”.

Remember, we are under no legal obligation to review and approve these plans.

So, why are we putting ourselves through all of this aggravation?

Planning without action is futile.
Action without planning may be
fatal.

-Author Unknown