

Special Needs Sheltering

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Who is special needs?

- A person with special needs means someone, who during periods of evacuation or emergency, requires sheltering assistance, due to physical impairment, mental impairment, cognitive impairment or sensory disabilities.
- Eligibility Criteria for Sheltering
 - A person with special needs
 - Care needs exceed basic first aid provided at general population shelters
 - Medically stable
 - Do not exceed the capacity, staffing and equipment of the special needs shelter

What does that mean?

- Electrically Dependent
- Oxygen Dependent
- Alzheimer's and Dementia
- Cancer Patients
- Hospice Patients
- Bed-bound Individuals
- Ventilator Patients
- Cancer Patients
- Frail Elderly
- Persons with Chronic Disease
- Mobility Issues
- Insulin Dependent
- Autism

No One is Turned Away from a Special Needs Shelter that Doesn't Have a Safe Place to Shelter During an Emergency

Department of Health Role

- F.S. 252.385 requires DOH to assist the Division of Emergency Management in determining:
 - Estimated need for special needs shelter space; and
 - Adequacy of facilities to meet the needs of persons with special needs.
- Establish and facilitate the SpNS Interagency Committee
- CHDs review special needs registrant applications to determine appropriate care needs during storms and plan with counties to ensure designated shelter space is adequate for special needs operations.



Department of Health Role

- Coordinate recruitment of health care practitioners to staff special needs shelters (SpNS)
- Coordinate with DEM to ensure appropriate designation and operation of SpNS based on registry data
- Provide staff from multi-agency SpNS discharge planning teams



Irma Special Needs Sheltering

Statistics:

- 53 counties opened SpNS (of 57 with shelters)
- 113 individual SpNS opened
- At the peak of shelter operations on Sept 10:
 - 96 SpNS were open with
 - 10,452 special needs clients
 - 4,490 caregivers

Challenges:

- Unprecedented numbers seeking sheltering
- Surge in last minute registrations
- Storm path severely limited ability to move staff between counties
- Higher acuity clients than the shelters were equipped to handle



Next Steps

- Seek additional sources for Special Needs Shelter staffing through enhanced community partnerships, additional contingency contracts and requiring other state and federally funded health care entities to assist.
- Work with healthcare facilities to ensure operational evacuation plans to “like” facilities and not special needs shelters.
- Re-assess numbers, acuity and plans for special needs registration to ensure adequate capacities statewide.
- Explore implementing successful SpNS partnership models statewide (i.e. Duval’s Adopt-a-Shelter Program)

Questions?

