Weathering the Storm: The Survival Guide for Long Term Care Providers in Florida

By
Bob Asztalos
Florida Health Care Association
Long Term Care (LTC) in Florida

- 683 licensed Nursing Homes consisting of approximately 83,587 beds
- 3,109 licensed Assisted Living Facilities (ALFs) with approximately 92,000 beds
- Florida Health Care Association (FHCA) represents over 550 of the 683 Nursing Homes and approximately 100 ALFs
- Most Florida LTC facilities located close to water and in flood/evacuation zones
685 Nursing Homes
83,925 Patient Beds

(AHCA – 4.23.18)
Florida Emergency Management (EM) Structure

• State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) located in Tallahassee
• Each of the 67 counties has an EOC: Many have coastlines
How Florida EM Grew Up

- Hurricane Andrew, August 24, 1992
- Hurricane Season of 2004 and 2005
  - Hurricane Charley, August 13, 2004
  - Hurricane Frances, September 4, 2004
  - Hurricane Ivan, September 16, 2004
  - Hurricane Jeanne, September 26, 2004
  - Hurricane Katrina, August 25, 2005
  - Hurricane Wilma, October 24, 2005

Remember 2004
- 5 storms
- 4 within 44 days
How Florida EM Continues to Learn

• Hurricane Matthew, October 7, 2016

• Hurricane Irma, September 10, 2017
Challenges: Pre-Storm Impact

• Should we stay or go?
  • Have a solid Comprehensive Emergency Plan and follow it.
  • Evacuation/Transfer Trauma/Conflict with Local Emergency Management
  • Communicate, Communicate, Communicate! Families, friends and regulators want to know
• Preparation for sheltering in place
  • Transfer most vulnerable population/those that can be with family
  • 3-7 Days of food, water, supplies and ICE
  • Staff and family bunk up and a work rotation schedule
  • Dialyze as close to storm as possible
  • Ice and fuel replenishment and service for the generator
Challenges: Pre-Storm Impact

• Should we stay or go (continued)?
  • Preparing to evacuate
    • Pick the most appropriate facility/facilities looking at geography and distance and ability to house residents
    • Transportation assets arranged and have a backup plan
    • Plan to transport records, staff and supplies together with residents
    • Avoid the temptation to wait until last minute when the roads are jammed and the storm is bearing down on your residents’ in transit.
    • Be flexible and prepared. Plans will fall through and residents may end up in a place not contemplated.
Challenges: Storm Impact

• Generator and fuel ready
• Radio and satellite phone to stay in contact for storm updates: Don’t just depend on cell phone
• Stay in communication with local Emergency Management and be ready when things go wrong
  • May have to evacuate or evacuate up, or to an area of refuge in the facility
  • Staff for any acute episode that may occur
• Activities for residents, staff, family members and event pets
Challenges: Post-Storm Impact

• Once winds die down, assess situation, notify local EM/regulators and prepare to be on your own
  • Is the building safe or is evacuation necessary
    • No major structural damage or flooding
    • No Power? Generator working and plan to refuel
    • Maintain a safe temperature
    • Sanitation, lift station down may cause evacuation
    • Access to water and ice/supplies/trash storage/laundry/
      • Cash works when credit cards don’t
  • Don’t allow staff to burn out
    • Rotate and rest staff
    • Allow them to visit their homes
    • Think fuel and transportation to allow them to commute from home
Challenges: Post-Storm Impact

- Caring for residents while on generator power
  - Monitor temperatures and hydrate/lots of ice
  - Dialysis, three days comes fast
  - May transfer ventilator residents if on a generator
  - Hospitals want to send residents back and you will want to transfer residents in distress
  - EM looking to transfer in as special needs shelters close
FHCA Role in Disaster Preparation

- Disaster preparation prior to storm
  - Emergency Preparedness Committee, (Volunteer FHCA members, Associate Members and EM personnel at state and local levels) mobilize efforts to support local nursing homes
  - In the 18 months prior to Hurricane Irma, nearly 1,500 LTC and EM professionals participated in 35 FHCA-sponsored joint trainings/educational seminars across Florida, many with table top exercises.
  - A recent survey by Emory University reported that 94% of Florida nursing centers have regular communications with local emergency management agencies to discuss emergency preparedness ... 88% discuss emergency preparedness with their residents ... 85% share emergency preparedness policies with residents’ families.
  - Host daily call with state regulators and EM personnel for LTC providers same time each day (11:00 AM) from one week prior to event until all power restored
FHCA and the State EOC

• Born out of a workout in the gym
• Activate with the State EOC prior to and through event
  • Along with Agency and partners, man the ESF-8 LTC facility desk (Augment government partners)
  • Operate desk 12 to 24 hours per day depending on need
  • Other partners include the Florida Hospital Association. Other associations consulted as needed.
  • All hands-on-deck for FHCA staff who work from FHCA office
FHCA and the State EOC

• Activate with the EOC prior to and through event (continued)
  • Assist the Agency for Health Care Administration (licensing agency)
    • Assist all facilities, whether member or not
    • Can have better dialogue with facilities
    • Can access private resources in addition to Government provided
  • Provide accurate intelligence to Agency/EM
  • FHCA members staff select county EOCs
  • Train with State EM and Agency Personnel all year.
How Did Florida Facilities Weather Irma

• During Hurricane Irma:
  • 350 nursing homes/1,677 ALFs lost power (1/2 in excess of 2 days), and continued to successfully care for 68,000 residents throughout the storm.
  • 862 total healthcare facilities (including 88 nursing homes/635 ALFs) successfully evacuated
  • More than 500 nursing homes and 2,000 ALFs successfully sheltered their residents in place.
  • 90 LTC providers returned post-evacuation before full power was restored
Hollywood Hills Nursing and Rehabilitation

• What happened?
• Will the new laws prevent another Hollywood Hills?
Nursing Home/ALF Emergency Power Rules

- Nursing Homes
  - AHCA Rule 59A-4.1265/HB 7099
    http://ahca.myflorida.com/MCHQ/Health_Facility_Regulation/Long_Term_Care/docs/Nursing_Homes/59A-4.1265_EmergencyEnvironmentalControlForNursingHomes.pdf

- ALFs
  - DOEA Rule 58A-5.036/SB 7028
Nursing Home/ALF Emergency Power Rules

• Safe temperatures at all times for residents for minimum 96 hours
  • Must support area of refuge with internal temperatures of maximum 81 degrees and no less than 30 square feet per resident
• Emergency power source maintained at the facility when residents on premises
• Piped gas or 72 hours onsite fuel with additional 24 hours of fuel brought onsite (to achieve 96 hours) upon Declaration of an Emergency
• If fuel storage is restricted by regulations and piped gas is not available, must replenish 24 hours prior to depletion
ALF Emergency Power Rules

• Same as Nursing Home rule except:
  • Must support area of refuge with internal temperatures of a maximum of 81 degrees for no less than 20 square feet per resident, may use 80% of licensed capacity to calculate/resident choice/monitor

• 72 hours onsite fuel or piped gas for 17+ beds
• 48 hours onsite fuel or piped gas for 16 or less beds
• Bring additional fuel onsite (to achieve 96 hours) upon Declaration of an Emergency
• Carbon monoxide detectors are required
Emergency Power Source Guidelines for LTC Facilities

• Implement plans by June 1, 2018

• Extend until January 1, 2019 for certain delays
  • Must still arrange for safe temperatures
  • Have an alternative power source onsite or contract for delivery within 24 hours of state of emergency
  • May evacuate if in an evacuation zone

• Additional extensions by Rule Variance after January 1, 2019
Lessons Learned

• **682 Nursing Homes and over 3,000 ALFs got it right**
  • Participate in training
  • Solid Comprehensive Emergency Plan and followed it
  • Have alternative plans and be flexible if it does not work
  • Know your Emergency Management Personnel before the disaster
  • Keep staff, families and EM informed
  • You are not wrong if you do what is in the best interest of your residents
  • Do what it takes to keep your residents safe
  • You are not alone, if you need help reach out and if you don’t get an answer keep reaching out.