

Health and Medical Sheltering



Mission: To develop a standardized, comprehensive, county, regional and statewide approach to Special Needs Shelter (SpNS) operation that ensures continuity in services and quality care to clients, caregivers and staff during their stay in a Special Needs Shelter.

Vision: To provide services to Florida's residents with access and functional needs during a disaster using a systems approach, integrating with community partners to provide the best possible sheltering experience.



Purpose: Health and Medical Sheltering initiatives enhance the SpNS Program through a continuous cycle of planning, equipping, training, exercising, and evaluating. Activities are designed to ensure prepared communities, a prepared workforce, and informed clients in the event Special Needs Sheltering is required as part of Florida's response to a natural, manmade, or technological incident.

Program Authority / Funding: Section 381.0303 Florida Statutes and Florida Administrative Code 64-3. The department receives funds from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) Cooperative Agreements.

Health and Medical Sheltering aligns with:

[Florida Public Health and Healthcare Preparedness 2012-2014 Strategic Plan](#)

Goal 3: Emergency Triage and Pre-Hospital Treatment

[ASPR Healthcare Preparedness Capabilities](#)

Capability 1: Healthcare System Preparedness

[CDC Public Health Preparedness Capabilities: National Standards for State and Local Planning, 3/2011](#)

Capability 7: Mass Care

Objectives:

- Establish Special Needs Shelter standards, protocols, and technical assistance that can be integrated into the Florida Emergency Management System
- Support counties in the development of plans and other care for community members at high risk for poor health outcomes after a disaster
- Support counties in the operation and staffing of Special Needs Shelters
- Provide resources, training, and technical assistance for supporting the sheltering of persons with access and functional needs
- Provide resources for discharge planning to safely return persons to the community following temporary sheltering
- Support and measure facility readiness, typed-staffing team capability, and timeframe benchmarks for opening SpNS
- Maintain shelter census data during an event including the number of persons in the shelters, age range, and access or functional need

- Support the Division of Emergency Management in implementing FEMA's Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) guidance on integrating functional and access needs in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. Support includes consultation, data, and health and medical resources
- Convene and facilitate a SpNS Interagency Committee to address SpNS related issues and for consultation on planning and operation

2012-2013 Highlights:

- Florida currently has 127 special needs shelters with a total capacity of approximately 30,000
- 100% of special needs shelters met readiness assessment standards
- 427 persons completed the Online Refresher Nursing Skills Course with St. Petersburg College. This was a dramatic increase over the 164 completing the course the year before.
- The Special Needs Shelter Operations and Management Course was updated and made available as an online course through St. Petersburg College at: www.onlinece.net/ELearning/CourseCatalog.aspx. The course can be found by following the link on the webpage for the Florida Department of Health.
- A comprehensive review was made of the Special Needs Shelter Program Webpage and online toolkit. Forms and other resources were updated and included in the enhanced toolkit
- The 2010 Discharge Planning Resource Guide was updated and released. A new County Specific Supplement was added
- Over 100 persons participated in an interagency Discharge Planning Webinar to discuss the importance of discharge planning and to introduce participants to the 2012 Discharge Planning Resource Guide
- The online Discharge Planning Toolkit was updated to include the revised Discharge Planning Resource Guide, updated partner agency table, Webinar slides, recording, transcript, questions and answers, and other newly obtained resources
- The CDC highlighted Florida and its discharge planning activities on its website at www.cdc.gov/aging/emergency/planning_tools/recovery_planning.htm. Florida documents were the only referenced resources
- Planning resources for sheltering persons with access and functional needs were researched, collected, and provided to the Division of Emergency Management in support of activities implementing FEMA's guidance.

Partners: County Health Departments, Department of Health Children's Medical Services Florida Division of Emergency Management, Department of Elder Affairs, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Interagency Special Needs Shelter Committee and partner agencies, local emergency management, Red Cross

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For more information on the Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Preparedness and Response, Health and Medical Sheltering go to: www.floridahealth.gov and put the word "Shelter" in the search box.