



Florida's Public Health & Medical System **PREPARES & RESPONDS**

VULNERABLE POPULATION: Elders 60 and Older

The population of residents and visitors age 60 and older is an increasing group within our state. Florida ranks first in the nation in the percentage of residents who are 60 and older. When preparing for disaster events, it is important to consider the large number of elders across the state that live alone.

Key Issues:

- Many elders will not seek the use of a general or special needs shelter prior to an event. However, should the area suffer significant structural damage, they may require these facilities from 3 to 7 days post event or longer.
- In many communities, the elder population living independently may be in a subdivision that was established 30 or more years earlier. These areas are referred to as naturally occurring retirement communities.
- Many elders may be on one or more prescription medicines. An event that disrupts the mail may result in a delay of receipt of necessary medicines.
- Many elders may be hesitant to leave behind their personal belongings and pets to evacuate or relocate to a shelter.

Planning Considerations:

- Consider transportation options for facilities designated for shelter use that may not be easily accessible to elder clients.
- Identify mobile home parks where elders may be residing.
- Identify naturally occurring retirement communities within the county.
- Some seniors will require only ambulatory assistance to and from personal hygiene needs; therefore, non-licensed personal assistants may be used to reduce the demand on nursing staff.
- Ensure that shelters are ADA compliant.
- Consider Functional Needs Support Services for general population shelters as not all elders need the services of a special needs shelter
- Ensure that Special Needs Shelter Registration information is available and readily accessible.
- Ensure pet-friendly shelter options.

Supporting Agency:

Department of Elder Affairs: <http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us> or 850-414-2000. Statewide toll-free Elder Helpline: 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337).

Additional Information: The following resources provide more information on planning considerations for elders during disasters and other emergencies:

Florida Department of Elder Affairs Disaster Preparedness:
<http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/disaster.php>

Florida's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Emergency Preparedness Resources:
http://ombudsman.myflorida.com/emergency_preparedness.php