



**To all Canon Hospice Patients and Families**

**We are now entering into the 2015 hurricane season. Please review the following information and be sure you are prepared for any impending emergencies.**

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**YOUR PERSONAL EMERGENCY PLAN**

Hurricane preparation for hospice patients and their caregivers can present special challenges. Hopefully this letter will address most of your concerns.

Many hospice patients and their families have experienced severe storms in the past and have survived the damage and loss of property that has occurred during previous hurricane seasons. It is from these lessons that we now turn our attention to the need to PREPARE our hospice patients and their caregivers for such emergencies.

Many emergencies, other than hurricanes, can touch our lives each day. Even a simple water main break or temporary power outage can be a major emergency if you are not prepared.

**STOCK YOUR HOME**

It is a good idea to stock a supply of food, water and supplies for an emergency. It is usually recommended to have at least one week's worth of supplies on hand.

## **WATER**

Each person's need for water varies, depending on age, physical condition, and time of the year. The average person needs at least two quarts of water or other liquid to drink per day, but more would be better. Also keep a couple of gallons on hand for sanitary purposes. Store water in plastic, airtight containers and replace every two months to be sure it is pure.

## **FOOD**

Supplies should include enough nonperishable, high-energy foods to feed you and your family for up to seven days. You may be stranded in your home for several days or local stores may run low on supplies. Also, if you actually have to evacuate, it is helpful to take as much non-perishable food as you can carry.

### **Suggested Foods:**

- Whole dry milk
- Canned fruit juices
- Canned meats and fish (tuna, Vienna sausage or canned ham)
- Meat substitutes, like beans and nuts
- Peanut butter
- Dried Fruits
- Dry cereals, bread and crackers
- Granola bars or cookies
- Any special dietary needs

## **DISASTER KIT**

A well-stocked disaster kit can save untold hardships in an emergency situation. Consider gathering the following items to ensure your basic comfort and well-being.

### **Suggested Supplies and Equipment:**

- Battery operated radio with weather band
- First-aid kit
- Flashlight
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Paper plates and utensils, including a bottle and a can opener
- Toiletry articles and sanitary items
- Extra batteries
- Other items related to the daily care of the hospice patient

## MEDICINE AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES

It is very important to keep an adequate supply of any medicines you take. If you are stranded in your home, or evacuate out of your home, you may not be able to get more medication easily. We will make sure you have at least two weeks of medicine with you during hurricane season. But it is VERY IMPORTANT to remember to take your MEDICATION BOTTLES with you if you leave the area on evacuation, not just your daily pill box. When you need to refill medications (wherever you may be) you will need your medication bottle with the name of the pharmacy, ordering physician and specific medication instructions. Most pharmacies across the country will be able to help you in an emergency if you have your medication bottles with you.

## PLAN FOR EVACUATION

Even though you have emergency supplies, DO **NOT** make the mistake of ignoring the order to evacuate. EVACUATE if local authorities tell you to do so, especially if you live in low-lying areas that easily flood.

Upon admission your admit nurse filled out a "At Risk" report on you. This form contains information regarding the plans you and your family have for evacuation.

***IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR CANON HOSPICE TO HAVE THE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR EACH PATIENT SO THAT WE CAN KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOU THROUGHOUT ANY EMERGENCY EVACUATION SITUATION. EMAIL ADDRESSES, TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF YOUR EVACUATION DESTINATION AND CELL NUMBERS ARE VERY HELPFUL PIECES OF INFORMATION TO SHARE WITH CANON HOSPICE!!!***

- Plan ahead to make evacuation easier.
- Keep Canon Hospice informed of any changes in your evacuation plans. We cannot assist you if we cannot locate you.
- If possible, make plans in advance to stay with family or relatives living inland or on higher ground should you need to evacuate.
- Know your destination in advance!
- Plan the route you will take to evacuate. Plan to leave **BEFORE CONTRAFLOW** is called to avoid long waits and extended periods of time in the car.

## FOR PATIENTS ON OXYGEN

Bring your E-tanks with you for travel in the car and pack your oxygen concentrator (the one that plugs into the wall) for use once you reach your destination. It is very important that oxygen dependent

patients leave EARLY to minimize the amount of time required for travel. **Remember NO SMOKING when oxygen is in use.**

## **BE AWARE OF CHANGES IN WEATHER CONDITIONS**

Listen to daily weather forecasts during the hurricane season. As hurricanes develop, they are monitored closely by the National Weather Service. These reports can be easily followed on all the local television and radio stations.

The National Weather Service issues two types of notices about approaching hurricanes.

- 1) A HURRICANE WATCH means a hurricane may threaten coastal and inland area, and that Hurricane conditions are a real possibility. It is a TIME TO PREPARE!!!

When a watch is issued for your area you should:

- Stay tuned to your local stations for the latest weather information.
- Make sure you have reviewed your evacuation plans with your nurse or social worker
- Gather your emergency supplies. Make sure your home is secure. Lawn and patio furniture should be stored away in advance. Garbage cans, garden tools, toys, signs and a number of harmless items can become flying projectiles in hurricane winds.
- Gather important papers in your home such as birth and marriage certificates, wills, insurance policies, deeds, etc. Place them in a water proof container with your non-perishable food supply or in your safety deposit box.

- 2) A HURRICANE WARNING is issued when a hurricane is expected to strike within 24 hours. When this warning is issued you should already be out of the area and safely at your destination. Remember with heavy rains that often come with these storms, roads flood quickly and can quickly block roadways.

## **EVACUATION TIME**

When a hurricane watch is called, hospice evacuation goes into action. The majority of the patients on the Inpatient Unit are in a critical state and will be evacuated along with some of the Canon Hospice Staff. Please know that this evacuation DOES NOT include luxury accommodations. Patients are often on blow-up mattress on the floor and we cannot guarantee that our evacuation site will have air conditioning or electricity.

The Louisiana and Mississippi Hospice and Palliative Care Organization make the following recommendation:

*“The preference is that every patient seen by a hospice agency will evacuate with family or friends. The patients requiring assistance from parish offices of emergency preparedness will have to leave when the parish is ready to evacuate them, and go where the parish takes them. Patients/families making their own plans will have choices; those depending on government entities won’t have this luxury.”*

The Department of Health and Hospitals states:

Your hospice agency will encourage patients and their families to follow their personal emergency plans and instructions. Patients and their families should have the ultimate responsibility for planning appropriately. In the case of children, the parent(s) or guardian(s) have that responsibility.

We care greatly about the safety of all of our patients, but it is **physically impossible** to take all patients (on the inpatient unit and at home) with us to our planned evacuation site. Patients on the inpatient unit will be allowed to leave with their families and evacuate with them. At the time of the storm we will be contacting or visiting all home patients to get their updated evacuation plans. **The preferred method of evacuation is ALWAYS with your family.** Hurricane evacuation is very difficult on terminally ill patients and especially on patients with dementia. Unfamiliar surroundings and unfamiliar people are not a good combination for comfort.

If a patient is at home and is considered at-risk....the patient may be able to receive assistance from the department of emergency preparedness.

## **THE AT RISK REGISTRY**

Canon's emergency plan now includes registering all patients with the state-wide At Risk Registry Program. By registering with this program; the Emergency Offices in your area know what assistance you may require.

### **At-Risk patients are defined as:**

- **Hospice patient living alone, unable to evacuate self**
- **Hospice patient living with caregiver (either mentally or physically) unable to evacuate patient and self.**
- **Hospice patient/family without financial means to evacuate.**
- **Hospice patient/family refusing to evacuate.**

***The patient or patient representative must sign a Registry Release.***

***Please note.....Patients cannot be included in the Registry without a signed Release.***

Once a patient is registered with the At Risk Registry, their information will be forwarded to the Emergency Preparedness office (EPO) in the Parish in which they reside. This will put them in line for assistance with the EPO should evacuation be required. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT WHEN EVACUATION ASSISTANCE IS OFFERED, IT MUST BE ACCEPTED AT THE TIME OF

OFFERING. FAILURE TO ACCEPT EVACUATION ASSISTANCE WILL MEAN THAT YOU WILL HAVE TO EVACUATE ON YOUR OWN.

Your Canon nurse will ask you to sign a consent to release your information to the current state registry programs. Both Orleans and Jefferson Parishes now require separate notification of residents who may require assistance. That notification will be made for you at your request.

Canon Hospice Inpatient unit in New Orleans will be evacuating the inpatient unit to the north of I-12. All patients will be evacuated by ambulance. We will be completing our evacuation before CONTRAFLOW BEGINS. If your loved one goes on evacuation with us, we will release the location to you so you may visit. We will not be able to provide transportation or shelter for hospice families. Once at the evacuation site we will allow one family member to stay with the patient but we ask that you bring your own bedding and supplies.

If you are a home patient and are evacuating with your family, please be sure to prepare for appropriate transportation. A temporary bed set up in the back of an SUV or sedan is often the most comfortable mode of transportation for a bedbound patient.

## **AFTER THE HURRICANE**

Local authorities will announce when it is safe to return to your home. Stay tuned into local television and radio stations for current information. Be sure your home is safe before you return. Make sure electricity, sewer, gas and water services are available!!

Notify Canon Hospice as soon as you return home so we may properly service you. We can be reached by phone at 504-818-2723 or you may contact us by email at [smay@canonhospice.com](mailto:smay@canonhospice.com) (for New Orleans) [canonhospicens@gmail.com](mailto:canonhospicens@gmail.com) (for the Northshore) [canonhospicebatonrouge@yahoo.com](mailto:canonhospicebatonrouge@yahoo.com) (for Baton Rouge)