

## **CLAY COUNTY SPECIAL NEEDS DISASTER PLANNING GUIDE**

Planning is essential in ensuring individual and family safety in the event of a hurricane or other disaster. In addition to ensuring that they have ample supplies and food, individuals and families should take evacuation planning into serious consideration. This is especially the case if an individual has a special medical need. For such individuals, the decision about where to go in the event of an evacuation should be made jointly with family, caregivers, physicians, home health care agencies or any other individuals or groups that lend assistance. To help in making the best decision concerning your care, the following information is provided:

### **Public Shelters:**

Because we realize a portion of the population does not have the option of independent evacuation out of the area, Clay County in conjunction with the American Red Cross operates public shelters. Shelters are generally located in designated schools. These shelters are open to everyone and can be noisy, crowded and uncomfortable. Keeping this in mind, individuals should try to plan ahead to stay with relatives or friends, away from the areas that are anticipated to be affected by an event.

### **Special Needs Shelter:**

In the event of a disaster, Clay County also provides a special needs shelter. This shelter is available for those individuals who have special medical needs and live in areas that could be affected by a disaster, (i.e. a flood zone, hurricane evacuation zone, mobile home) or do not have any assistance. Individuals who wish to utilize this shelter must register with the Clay County Department of Emergency Management **annually**. Registered individuals must bring all personal medical equipment, supplies and medications and, if possible, have a care giver accompany them to the shelter. Basic medical assistance and monitoring will be available at the special needs shelter. The shelter is **not** equipped with advanced medical equipment, nor is it staffed to provide an advanced level of care. Individuals requiring an advanced level of care should make advanced preparations with a hospital, assisted living facility or skilled nursing facility.

### **Hospital/Nursing Home:**

If it has been determined that an individual would need to be cared for at a hospital, assisted living facility, or skilled nursing facility, he or she should arrange pre-admittance well in advance with the assistance of a physician or caregiver. Any costs not covered by insurance, Medicare or Medicaid are the responsibility of the individual.

### **Registration:**

Individuals must register annually to utilize the special needs shelter by filling out the Special Needs Registration form, available online at [www.claycountygov.com](http://www.claycountygov.com) or by calling the Clay County Department of Emergency Management at (904)284-7703. The form must be filled out completely and legibly and returned to our office. After submitting the form, individuals will receive a letter confirming their registration and directing them to report to a public shelter, special needs shelter, hospital, assisted living facility or skilled nursing facility.

### **Transportation:**

Residents who require ambulance transportation to evacuate should make those arrangements prior to an event. In the event of a disaster, county response agencies will attempt to provide assistance, if possible. Because of obvious increases in demand,

the county may not be available to assist. Individuals should make sure that their transportation arrangements are made well ahead of time.

**Pets:**

Make arrangements in advance with family, friends, kennels or vets to care for your pets. Pets, with the exception of service animals, are not permitted in shelters.

**Checklist:**

1) Fill out and submit the special needs registration, if you intend to use the special needs shelter. Take notice and comply with the subsequent letter stating where you report to, (i.e. a general shelter, special needs shelter, hospital, assisted living facility or skilled nursing facility).

2) Gather a Disaster Supply Kit and have it stored in a dry, convenient, location. A Disaster Supply Kit should include:

- Medications (two week supply)
- Medical Supplies and Equipment
- Important paperwork (including medical paperwork) sealed in a water tight container
- Individual ID and Health Insurance ID
- Non-perishable food
- Can Opener
- Several Changes of Clothes
- Sleeping Bag and blankets
- Flashlights, Radio and Batteries
- First Aid Kit
- Quiet items to pass the time such as books

3) Share your plans with relatives and friends both inside and outside of the local area. Let them know where you will be and when and how you will try to communicate.

4) Monitor the radio or television for hazardous weather events or for information on any disaster.

5) If you decide to evacuate, gather your Disaster Supply Kit and proceed with your caregiver to your pre-designated location.

6) If you are registered for county-provided transportation to the special needs shelter, be prepared to leave immediately when said transportation arrives.