

GREATER NEW YORK HEALTH CARE FACILITIES ASSOCIATION

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Memo 20-43

To: Administrator, DNS, Medical Director, Infection Preventionist and QA Committee

From: GNYHCFA Team

Date: November 3, 2020

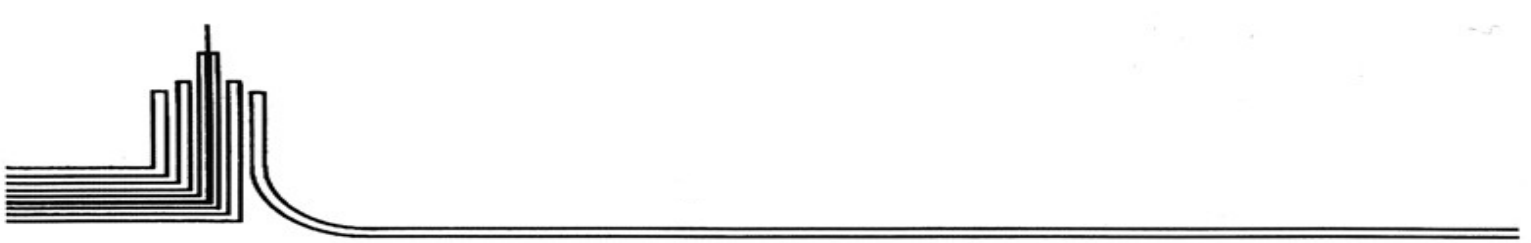
Re: Winter Weather Preparedness

New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) has issued recommendations for providers to prepare for the Winter Weather Season. In advance of a Winter Weather event, leadership and staff should review their Emergency Response and Evacuation Plans to ensure procedures are up to date, understood by staff and contact information for all key staff and partners is current. Additionally, plans for adequate staffing should be reviewed and should include the following:

- The use of redundant communications if normal mechanisms are impacted,
- Necessary notifications and alters to staff,
- Adjustments of shifts and management of staffing shortages due to transportation impacts,
- Securing needed supplies and preparations for staff that remain on site if roadways are not passable,
- Process for bringing in and housing additional staff period to a storm to ensure sufficient coverage during the storm event and recovery period.
- Emergency power

Prior to a winter weather event, please ensure that your facility tests your emergency generators. Fuel supplies for generators should be checked and additional fuel and food supplies, potable water, clean linen, and other items need to be on hand to cover operations for at least 72 hours. Other winter tips are as follows:

- Review heating system fuel supply agreements and levels
- Ensure additional bedding (i.e. blankets) is available
- Check windows for tight closure
- Ensure sufficient snow removal equipment is available and in good repair



Additionally, every provider must ensure that all computers and network infrastructure, necessary for disaster response, are supported by generator power. Providers need to ensure they have staff with active, (current password) HCS accounts, who are assigned to the roles (indicated below) in the HCS Communications Directory:

- *The HCS Communications Directory* – assure that all business and emergency contact information for key facility, administrative staff is up to date in the HCS Communications Directory. This contact information is the main data source used by the NYSDOH alerting and notification system for sending emergency and informational notifications to providers and conducting one on one communications and discussions where needed. If this data is not up to date, providers may not receive key information.

The HCS Communications Directory role that has access to make role assignments for their facility is the HPN Coordinator.

- *The Health Electronic Response Data System (HERDS)* – HERDS surveys may need to be conducted to capture important information regarding a provider’s status during an emergency and providers must be able to respond to any survey that might be activated.

The HCS Communications Directory Roles that enable staff to access HERDS include: HERDS Data Manager, HERDS Data Reporter, HERDS Survey Reporter, Administrator, HPN Coordinator.

- *eFINDS Patient and Resident Tracking application*: All nursing homes should assure that their eFINDS supplies are available (i.e., barcode scanner, wrist bands, and paper tracking logs) and that staff who have been trained on the use of the system are ready and available to perform this function on all shifts. **Staff should be trained to use eFINDS even in the event of a power outage and loss of internet connectivity.** If facilities need assistance with eFINDS use, please send email to: efinds@health.ny.gov.

Do not hesitate to contact the Association with any questions.