

# **Appendix J**

## **Special Needs Population**

## **I. Special Needs Population**

This Appendix addresses the identification of individuals with special needs within Garrett County who are unable to care for themselves in a disaster situation. A need exists to identify this population quickly, to minimize exposure to these individuals, by any agent causing environmental or physiological change to an already vulnerable population.

The definition of special needs includes but is not limited to:

- individuals with health and medical conditions that require observation, assessment, and maintenance;
- contagious health conditions that require precautions and isolation/quarantine;
- chronic conditions that require assistance with daily activities but not hospitalization;
- individuals with the inability to self administer medications,
- pregnant women;
- those who are visually and hearing impaired;
- non-English speaking individuals;
- physically handicapped;
- adults and children living in assisted living facilities.

The largest segment of special needs population in Garrett County can be identified using several programs currently in place at the Garrett County Health Department.

### **Garrett County Home Health Agency**

Contact: Linda Moe-(P)-301.334.7750

The Garrett County Health Department's (Home Health Program) is a home visitation program for individuals requiring skilled nursing care and aide services. The frequency of visitation is dependent on the seriousness of the condition. These medical problems usually require observation, assessment, ongoing maintenance, the development of a treatment plan and in some cases occupational and physical therapy.

This program has a database with a listing of individuals which may be utilized in a disaster situation to assist in the identification individuals requiring assistance with medical needs.

### **Medical Assistance Personal Care**

Contact: Martha Layton-(P) 301.334.7740

This personal care program augments the above Home Health Program and provides aide service such as bathing, dressing and other activities associated with daily living. Many of the individuals enrolled in this program don't qualify for the skilled nursing services listed above however must be enrolled in Maryland Medical Assistance. These individuals are referred from outside agencies and both local physicians and physicians from the surrounding areas contiguous to Garrett County for services.

A listing of individuals enrolled and receiving services is available in the event of a disaster, as well as a listing of health care providers providing these services.

### **Healthy Families/Healthy Start/WIC**

Contact: Healthy Families/Healthy Start-Earleen Beckman-(P) 301.334.7720

WIC-Carol Bass-(P) 301.334.7710

To address the needs of pregnant women and those women breastfeeding there are three programs within the Health Department which can provide a listing of individuals enrolled in these programs in the event of a disaster. These three programs are the Healthy Families Program and Women, Infant, Healthy Start and Children Program (WIC). The Health Families Program is a free home visitation program that provides pregnant women, new mothers and other family members' educational information about nutrition, pregnancy and post-partum services. The Healthy Start Program is structured like the Healthy Families Program, except these individuals are enrolled in Maryland Medical Assistance Program. The WIC Program provides healthy foods and nutritional counseling to pregnant women, new mothers, infants and children under the age of five.

All three programs have the ability to provide a contact listing from an electronic database.

Other agencies within Garrett and Allegany County can be utilized to identify special needs population in the county. Each of these agencies have special needs individuals enrolled in their programs and have the ability to provide a listing of these individuals for notification. Following is a brief program description and contact number of the individual or agency of the respective program.

### **Appalachian Parent Association, Inc.**

Contact: William Aspinall (P) 301.334.8449

Provides services for the mentally retarded within Garrett County.

**Department of Rehabilitative Services**

Contact: Tom Rothrock (P) 1.800.801.4297 or 301.791.4760  
Jim Walhide

Provides services for individuals with vision and hearing impairments.

**Department of Health & Mental Hygiene**

Contact: Mary Gero (P) 1.800.296.2242  
(H) 304.298.3074

*Younger Adult Waiver*

This program provides assistance for disabled individuals aged 19-50 with chronic medical diagnoses, e.g., Congestive Heart Failure, Multiple Sclerosis, head injuries, quadriplegics, and paraplegics.

**Department of Social Services**

Contact: Liz Hart (P) 301.533.3000

A chore service program for the elderly that provides bathing, cleaning, cooking, and laundry services.

**Garrett County Area Agency on Aging**

*Older Adult Waiver Program*-Contact: Kitty Stewart (P) 301.334.9431

This program provides an aide to assist clients who are provided a waiver to the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to avoid nursing home placement.

*Senior Care Program*-Contact: Leona Beckman (P) 301.334.9431

This program provides aide service to clients who do not qualify for Maryland Medical Assistance Program.

**Garrett County Lighthouse**

Contact: Debbie Jo Noralski (P) 301.334.9126

Provides out-patient counseling and case management service for the mentally ill in Garrett County.

**CTS Language Link Service**

Contact: 1.800.208.2620 or 360.693.7100 or [www.ctsll.com](http://www.ctsll.com)

This service is to accommodate the multilingual needs of individuals who need translations services, if the language is not capable of being translated by a list of individuals within the county who speak different languages.

## **II. Assumptions**

If the situation is minor, special care may be provided by a few individuals or groups or by public service organizations with experience with disaster situations.

Larger emergencies could require the local emergency management system to coordinate and deliver provisions of specialty care to the appropriate institutions and individuals. Public service organizations with experience would be utilized in this situation.

A large catastrophic event would require the involvement of many individuals and agencies to care for the influx of potential evacuees especially those with medical conditions among the special needs population.

## **III. Concept of Operations**

Assist the elderly and handicapped to make the transition to shelters.

Operate emergency shelter facilities for those displaced from institutions and their homes.

Attempt to cohort individuals with similar medical problems in facilities with similar characteristics being respective of their needs.

Protect the vulnerable individuals from self harm from the disaster situation or from abuse by others.

Provide counseling services for those receiving psychiatric care.

Assist in the identifications of children or adults unable to identify themselves at a shelter location.

Provide child care service for pregnant women and those who have recently delivered.

Provide child care for children separated from their families or those who have no family.

Assist and coordinate the relocation of individuals from hospitals, clinics and other medical care facilities to appropriate shelters.

Coordinate and assist tracking finances between the special needs population and appropriate agencies.

#### IV. Organization and Responsibilities

- A. An Emergency Special Services Team should be formed to provide care for the special needs population. This team should include a variety of personnel from many different organizations. The recruitment of volunteers should be from:
- Health care providers from the public and private health sector along with personnel from the Department of Social Services;
- Public and private school administrators and teachers;
- Licensed clinical social workers and counselors including psychologists;
- Health care professionals from medical facilities;
- Transportation professionals;
- Physicians and nurses.
- B. The Emergency Services Team may be divided into three groups:
1. Special Needs Operations  
Manage all activities involving the care and services for the special needs population.
  2. Screening and Identification  
Manage screening, identification and referral of all special needs persons, missing persons, and those unable to identify themselves. Provide information to the Public Information Officer or media liaison to assist with the identification of missing persons and to provide public information.
  3. Support  
Secure and control equipment and supplies inventory, communication, transportation, financial assistance, contracts and agreements.
- C. Overall Coordination
- The overall responsibility of Special Needs Operations is the Team Leader and the responsibilities are to:

1. Coordinate and direct all Special Needs Operations throughout the emergency.
2. Prepare, implement, and coordinate procedures to provide specialty care for persons evacuated.
3. Establish a liaison with other emergency services to coordinate operations.
4. Coordinate planning with other health and special care coordinators including agencies, organizations and individuals.
5. Prepare and maintain a contact list of Emergency Special Services staff, functions and personnel assigned to the team.
6. Prepare and maintain a list of facilities or shelters cohorting the special needs population individuals with similar diagnoses and provide special requirements necessary to provide care, including the capacity of the shelter.
7. Identify staff and resources and delegate duties as rapidly as possible.

## Emergency Special Services Organizational Chart

