



COMMUNITY OUTREACH SUCCESS STORIES

The following are stories/situations where the efforts of the Florida Kidney Disaster Coalition have resulted in additional outreach and action:

The Florida Kidney Disaster Coalition is in the process of developing a “mock disaster drill” with the purpose of evaluating patient and staff readiness / preparedness for disasters. The Coalition has a goal of making this tool available across the renal community in the near future so that providers may “self-administer” the drill. To date, patient and facility questionnaires are being finalized along with many hurricane-related scenarios. Please watch for this exciting addition to your growing list of disaster-related tools and resources. --Linda Carroll, RN, member of the Florida Kidney Disaster Coalition

I am a hurricane survivor. I am also a dialysis nurse. The effects of the 2004 & 2005 hurricane seasons have directly impacted my patients and me. I have experienced the results of improper disaster preparedness firsthand. It's one thing to have a nice written disaster manual, but quite another thing to have to use it! This compelled me to do several things. I have become a member of my hospital's disaster mitigation strike force trained in not only natural disasters, but also biological and chemical decontamination. I also joined the newly formed Florida Kidney Disaster Coalition. Dr. Carl Bruggemeyer, our state coalition's physician advisor, inspired me to become very active in disaster preparedness at the local level. As the one of the acute-care hemodialysis nurses in Sarasota County, I have enjoyed a unique relationship with the chronic-care centers, nephrologists and hemodialysis patients in our area. I also fill in as an emergency room nurse in my hospital; (a job I held before becoming a dialysis nurse!) so I have a relationship with emergency responders, as well. After my first Coalition meeting and many phone calls and emails later, we held our first meeting in Sarasota County to discuss putting the Coalition's action plan in place. Kim Schroeder, RN, CNN, Network 7 Nurse Educator, has been an invaluable resource and touchstone. She graciously attended our first meeting and helped to sort out what our first steps should be. There are approximately 500 hemodialysis patients in Sarasota County who receive their treatments at one of five facilities. We also have a mobile unit providing services to home and bed-bound extended care patients. There are four hospitals in Sarasota County; three provide hemodialysis with less than ten acute care dialysis nurses. The services at one of the three hospitals is provided by a contracted agency (One of our county's chronic dialysis centers provide the staffing.) As you can see from the numbers, it was imperative to do some planning. To date, we have collected demographic data from each center utilizing a tool supplied by the Florida Kidney Disaster Coalition. We are collating this data into one user-friendly form, which will be used not only by our local Emergency Operations Center, but by all providers, as well. Some of the chronic centers have volunteered to be part of our county disaster drill program. We drill monthly at Doctors Hospital of Sarasota using decontamination equipment and volunteer "victims". The Sarasota County Dialysis Coalition is holding its second meeting at the end of May. It is at this meeting that we will share our demographic data with Sarasota County Emergency Management officials and other community partners. Many scenarios and issues have been brought to the table and new partnerships are being formed. Each member of the county's coalition has unique problems and circumstances. With the help of our physician advisors, Dr. Ranjan Ghose and Dr. Dennis Imperio, as well as the Network 7 staff and Florida State Kidney Disaster Coalition, we in Sarasota County are becoming better prepared. I would encourage everyone out there to do the same. Take the lead; get involved. No one

else knows your county's situation better. Our patient's lives are dependent on it. --Sheri Kennedy, RN, member of the Florida Kidney Disaster Coalition

At the recommendation of disaster coalition members, and as a result of our initial dialysis provider meeting with the Palm Beach County EOC office, dialysis providers in Palm Beach County have additional opportunities to participate in disaster preparedness initiatives that directly impact our patient population.

During two general provider meetings, and additional sub-committee meetings, we have formed important partnerships with other community stakeholders such as emergency medical management and our primary patient transportation company, Palm Tran. These partnerships have resulted in additional outreach opportunities for the dialysis provider and patient community such as,

- Dialysis Liaison – volunteer members of the dialysis provider community will work hand in hand with the ESF-8 Health Services desk before, during and after any disaster situation to help facilitate services for dialysis providers and patients in Palm Beach County;*
- Dialogics Communication System - dialysis providers have the opportunity to participate in an emergency communication system through the EOC office, whereby providers supply the identity-protected phone numbers of their patients and staff to the Palm Beach County EOC office for programming into their community notification system. Automated public service announcements are scheduled to commence mid June with a general message related to hurricane preparedness.*

These meetings with the Palm Beach County EOC have provided invaluable opportunities to communicate the special needs of our patients, and to develop relationships with other members of the dialysis community that transcend any competitive and political barriers. As a community working together, we can help to ensure that our patients maintain continuous access to quality care during any crisis.

--Sue Rottura, member of the Florida Kidney Disaster Coalition

The 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons highlighted issues of concern around the country in addressing the need for community emergency planning and relief efforts in the event of a major disaster. Hurricane Wilma particularly affected South Florida, with 102 dialysis facilities without power, water or both; one facility is still closed due to severe damage. There are 7323 ESRD patients in the areas impacted by Wilma.

In preparing for the 2006 hurricane season, and in the interest of year-round readiness to respond to emergency situations, Miami-Dade County ESRD providers met together at the Miami-Dade County Office of Emergency Management on May 8, 2006. A total of 44 were in attendance. Alex Sera, the ESF-8 Emergency Management Coordinator for Miami-Dade County, provided opening remarks.

A representative from Florida Power & Light also spoke about challenges faced in restoring power after disasters.

As Community Service Coordinator at Network 7, I provided an overview of the needs of kidney patients in disasters and how facilities can work with their local community to improve planning and preparation for disasters.

Cindy Toombs, VP Fresenius Medical Care South Florida led a discussion of how the Miami-Dade community can coordinate efforts. She emphasized:

- *Communication*
 - *Between providers and emergency management*
 - *Among community providers – by forming alliances and maintaining year-round communication*
 - *Need for high priority listing for phone restoration, cell phone chargers for cars, and other best practices*
- *Patient Preparedness*
- *Restoration of Power*
- *Generators*
 - *Attendees shared information about who currently has generators*
 - *Planning in advance for maintaining adequate supply of diesel*
- *Water Quality / Supply Issues*
 - *Tankers of water are needed – potable water for use in dialysis treatment; pre-contracting with water suppliers is recommended*
- *Transportation*
 - *Need for priority access to gasoline for personnel and patients*
 - *Pre-arrange with transportation providers*
 - *Contract / arrange for fuel in advance*
- *Security Company contracts are recommended – to secure facility, protect emergency generators and fuel*
- *Emergency Shelters*
 - *Call 305-468-5419 to find out if a patient is registered*
 - *Miamidade.gov lists shelters – available in English, Spanish and Creole*
 - *Identification of dialysis / transplant patients is needed; Fresenius is developing arm bands for their facility patients*
 - *If patients are evacuated out of the area, staff should be sent with them to assist the receiving facility with their care*
- *Curfews*
 - *ID cards are recommended for patients and staff*
 - *Educate local law enforcement regarding dialysis being a life-sustaining need*
- *Cash – patients and staff should have cash on hand in the event of an emergency*

Sarah Knott, Fresenius Lead Social Worker, shared information she collected in a Miami-Dade County dialysis patient survey. Patients identified the following key barriers to care:

- *Fear of what will happen if they do not have dialysis for 3-5 days*
- *No plan for transportation*
- *Communication barriers when phone lines and power are down*

The group decided on the following next steps for the Miami-Dade Provider Coalition:

- *A system for triage is needed during disasters, and local coordination of efforts with emergency managers.*
- *An invitation was sent via fax to all dialysis providers / personnel, requesting volunteers to work short shifts to staff a Miami-Dade County post-disaster telephone call center.*
- *Susan Kreuter and Maryellen Cox Lopez will coordinate and host the next meeting with Miami-Dade County providers and key partners at Jackson Memorial. Contact Susan at skreuter@dialysischoice.com.*
- *Network 7 will include the County EOC in Network pre and post-disaster calls, and will communicate open / closed / damaged status of facilities via the State ESS reporting system and via the Network website at www.fmqai.com.*

--Lisa Drossos, LCSW, member of the Florida Kidney Disaster Coalition