The Role of the Nurse in the Medical Needs Shelter

Objectives

- Identify the key functions and roles of a nurse in a Medical Needs Shelter (MNS)
- Discuss 4 potential groups of clients that may be found in a MNS
- Identify ways to prepare family, self and others to work in a MNS

Definition of a Medical Needs Shelter

- A refuge of last resort during emergency conditions for people:
  - with conditions requiring limited medical/nursing oversight who cannot be accommodated in a general population shelter
  - who bring their own caregiver, medical supplies, equipment, and special dietary supplies

Medical Needs Shelters
### Procedures for notifying Volunteer Nurses

- Nurses may be contacted by the Area Nursing Director in an event or by the voice messaging system if their phone number is in the volunteer data base.

### Notification Will Include

- Nature of assignment
- Where to report and when
- Length of assignment

### Nature of Assignment

- Hurricane
- Flu epidemic
- Ice storm
- Flood
- Point of Dispensing (POD) medication dispensing

### Supply Distribution to Areas

### Flu Vaccine Clinic
When and Where to Report

- Volunteers will be given specific locations and directions for all reporting or staging sites
- The time to report will be provided at the time of notification

Length of Assignment

- Length of assignment can vary based on the availability of the volunteer nurse

Nurse Response

- Nurse will not be expected to be on duty for more than 12 hours per day
- The staff nurse will be expected to remain in the shelter until released by the charge nurse

Nursing Roles in a Shelter

- Nurse Manager (ADPH Staff)
- Charge Nurse (ADPH Staff)
- Staff Nurse (RN & LPN)
- Care Assistants
Staff Responsibilities
While in the Shelter

Staff Nurse
- Reports to the Charge Nurse
- Delivers appropriate nursing services within the medical needs shelter under the direction of the Charge Nurse
- Assists the Charge Nurse as needed

Nurse Manager
- This is a registered Nurse appointed by the State Nursing Director, who reports to the Area Nursing Director or designee
- Provides supervision for the nursing and public health staff
- Oversees the medical aspects of the shelter

Nurse Manager
- Selects patient triage and care areas
- Communicates with the Emergency operations Center (EOC)

Charge Nurse
- Reports to Nurse Manager
- Supervises triage/assessment
- Monitors condition of patients and transfers as needed
- Assigns/supervises all staff related to the medical management of the shelter

Staff Nurse
- Performs triage/nursing assessment on individuals presenting at the medical needs shelter
- Refers individuals who do not meet the medical needs criteria to the mass care shelter or other facility with assistance from the service worker
- Assesses the physical condition of the patients at least every 2-3 hours
Staff Nurse

• Assists caregiver in delivering services to patients
• Assists with the collection of medical data pertaining to patients
• Assists with the discharge process of patients
• Assists in the general stand down of the shelter

Care Assistants

• Function
  – Provide patient care, activities of daily living, and light housekeeping duties

Care Assistants

• Personnel Utilized
  – Certified Nursing Assistants
  – Healthcare students
  – Home Health Aides
  – Home Attendants
  – Nurses Aides
  – Orderlies

Types of Patients found in a Medical Needs Shelter

• Diabetics
• Patients with Respiratory Issues
• Patients requiring tube changes
• Patients requiring simple dressings

Diabetics

• Diabetics may be common clients of the MNS in order to assist with:
  – Medication administration
  – Blood glucose monitoring
  – Nutritional assistance
Breathing Apparatus Users

- Common breathing apparatus seen in MNS include
  - C-pap and Bi-pap
  - Oxygen
  - Home ventilation clients

Tube Changes

- Items you may see in a shelter may include
  - Foley, suprapubic catheters;
  - Gastro tubes;
  - PICC lines, Groshogs and Hickman catheters
- Feeding tubes such as: Gastrostomy tubes, MIC tubes, and PEG tubes

Simple Dressings

- Individuals may be admitted to the MNS to assist with simple dressings or assistance with acquiring supplies

Being Prepared at Home

- Prepare for your family, pets, and self
  - Have a supply of medications
  - Know who will provide care for family members, including pets
  - Have one week of provisions for each family member, including pets
- Keep a list of all important phone numbers
- Secure all important documents
- Have extra supplies on hand

Preparing for Deployment

- Take comfort items and foods
  - Favorite pillow, favorite quilt, favorite photos journal, magazines, peanut butter/jelly
- Bottled water or juice for diabetics
- Items required for special diets
Preparing for Deployment
- Clothing for seven days, place all items for one day in plastic bag
- Personal care items
- Sleeping bag, pillow, extra sheets
- Daily and prn medications, Tylenol, Advil
- Towels, washcloths (at least 2)
- Soap, moist handtowels, tissues

Preparing for Deployment
- Cell phone and charger
- Books or magazines
- Snack items, granola bars
- Extra pair of shoes
- Small flashlight with extra batteries
- Radio with ear phones, earplugs

Liability Issues, Am I Covered?
- Governor of Alabama has the authority to declare a state of emergency
- A state of emergency is defined as
  - Enemy attack, sabotage
  - Fire, flood and “other natural causes”

Liability Issues, Am I Covered?
- As a volunteer with ADPH, you are covered just as a State of Alabama employee would be covered
- Function with in your scope of practice and knowledge level

Other Resources
- All-Hazards: What Are They and How Can I Prepare? (located at: www.adph.org/CEP - Community Preparedness)
- Family Readiness Guide (located at: www.adph.org/CEP)

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