

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES STRIKE TEAM
MEETING MINUTES

April 23, 2009

In attendance: Barbara Kopp, Laurel White, Carmela Gaudet, Judi Martin, Michelle Pilkington, Rik Jimison, Anna Day, Christine Griffith

Approval of March 26, 2009 minutes- Motion Michelle Pilkington, 2nd Barbara Kopp

A presentation by Christine Griffith, Division Director of Epidemiology and Communicable Disease Control, through Sarasota County Health Department was provided. Ms. Griffith provided details regarding the 3 Special Needs Shelters in Sarasota County.

Everyone needs to apply ahead of time for the shelters and the applications can be found on the county website at www.scgov.net. They need to be completed and mailed back. They cannot be sent in on line. A point to remember is that the shelters are to be a shelter of last resort when the person has nowhere else to go.

Individuals that have filled out applications will be called ahead of time to see if they will be coming to the shelter or seeking shelter elsewhere.

Even though the applications have been filled out ahead of time, each individual is triaged for eligibility into the shelter. If at that time they do not meet the criteria into the shelter they are transferred to a regular Red Cross Shelter.

Hospitals do have bed space for individuals too medically fragile for the special needs shelters. People on ventilators as well as quadriplegic individuals always are referred to the hospital beds.

Anyone on oxygen is automatically assigned to a special needs shelter. Liquid oxygen is utilized. Individuals are asked that they bring tanks to get them from home to the shelter as well as for their return trip home.

Each individual that comes into a special needs shelter needs to have a caretaker with them. Health Department nurses staff the shelters but they provide support, not nursing care. There is always a doctor available though.

Food is provided by the school board for 72 hours. If individuals are on special diets they need to bring their own food.

Everyone is also asked to complete a discharge plan in case something has happened and they cannot return to their previous residence.

To sum up the qualifications for a special needs shelter, an individual needs to have some kind of medical issue. Just a diagnosis of mental retardation or autism will not qualify them. They would be able to attend one of these shelters if a family member did meet one of the other criteria.

Many questions were brought up that if the individuals could not go to the special needs shelter then what could be offered at a Red Cross shelter. It was suggested that a representative from the Red Cross attend the next DD meeting to explain how they work. The Medical Reserve Corp was also discussed to enlist volunteers for helping with DD individuals in shelters. It was suggested that Susan Goffard of the MRC also be invited to the next meeting.

Another discussion ensued regarding individuals that reside in the community and have waiver support coordinators paid by the state and what their plans are in times of disasters. It was suggested that some of these support coordinators be contacted and invite them to the meetings to be a part of the team. Judi Martin and Michelle Pilkington will obtain a list of the support coordinators in the area and share with the team. Christine Griffith will also check with Health Department staff on what the responsibility is of independent agencies in having plans for disasters.

Due to lack of time, the mission of the team was not able to be discussed. It was suggested that everyone bring in ideas to the next meeting and a mission statement will be formulated. Anna Day will also e-mail out the mission statement that the Mental Health/Substance Abuse strike team formulated as a guideline.

The team is also still in need of a strike team leader. A decision needs to be made by the next meeting as to who will assume this role.

Everyone was asked to bring in for the next meeting a list of resources that they feel would be important to include on the teams resource list. This will be a work in progress and will be continually added to.

The following items were mentioned as important to the team to accomplish. Updates to some of them have been included. This is also a work in progress and we can add to this list or delete items that no longer have a high priority.

- Is there a written policy from the state that suspends capacity requirements of group homes after a disaster strikes? - **In process**
- What exactly does a “special needs shelter” mean? How do people apply? - **Christine Griffith of the Health Department provided presentation on these shelters.**
- Can the special needs shelters handle children with unique issues ie; sensory, behavior issues? - **They are not set up for this type of assistance.**
- Can the special needs shelter designate a specific room for these children and would therapists be permitted to come into the shelters to staff these rooms? – **Not at this point.**
- Have Health Department staff come to meeting to discuss these shelters.- **Complete**
- How are children in foster care dealt with in disasters? Have DCF representative attend a meeting.- **Foster homes have to have their own disaster plans for the children and these are required to be turned into their case workers.**
- Could these volunteers register with the Medical Reserve Corps? - **In process**
- Create a resource list of community agencies.- **In process**
- Create a list of respite providers that are already certified to volunteer in a disaster.- **In process**

Other Business:

Anna ordered copies of the resource book on Emergency Preparedness Guide for Floridians with Disabilities from the DD Council. Anyone can order and they are free and can be ordered by calling the DD Council number.

Michelle Pilkington provided information that she had received from the APD website as well as the website www.floridadisaster.org.

Rik Jimison also offered information on the Deep Center which provides disaster relief trainings.

Next meeting is scheduled for May 28, 2009 at 10:00 in room 2063 of the Sarasota County Health Department.