



Office of the Governor
Division of Medicaid

Dr. Robert L. Robinson
Executive Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 19, 2006

Mississippi Medicaid
Francis Rullan, Public Relations Dir.
601-359-6078
exfxr@medicaid.state.ms.us

Medicaid Urges Storm Season Sense

Some "Stay Alert, Stay Alive" Safety Tips for Beneficiaries

JACKSON, MS. - (May 19, 2006) - The Division of Medicaid is advising all beneficiaries and beneficiary support-givers to be ready for this year's storm season by taking the following precautions now:

Create an emergency health information card or sheet that communicates to rescuers what they need to know about you if they find you unconscious or incoherent, or if they need to quickly help evacuate you. Make multiple copies to keep in your emergency supply kits, car, work, wallet, wheelchair pack, etc.

List the following information:

- 1) Your name; street address; city, state, zip; phone numbers (home, work, cell)
- 2) Your birth date; blood type; Social Security Number
- 3) Your health insurance carrier and Individual and Group Number (include Medicaid and Medicare numbers); important numbers and any other insurance numbers; physicians' and pharmacies' names and telephone numbers; the nearest hospital and clinic telephone number and address
- 4) Your emergency contacts; conditions or any disability; a list of any adaptive equipment you use, your allergies and sensitivities, and communication or cognitive difficulties you may have; the names of medications you take and their dosages. Also include when you take a medication, the condition for which you take a medication, the name of the doctor who prescribed it, and the doctor's phone number. It is best if you are able to maintain **at least a 7-to-14 day supply** of essential medications (heart, blood pressure, birth control, diabetic, psychiatric, etc.) and keep this supply with you at all times. **If this is not possible, even maintaining a 3-day supply would be extremely helpful.**

(Continued)

It would be a very good idea to talk with your doctor or pharmacist about what you should do if you do not have enough medicine after a disaster and cannot immediately get what you need. Be sure you ask about the shelf life of your medications and the temperatures at which they should be stored.

- 5) A list of conditions a rescuer might need to know about (if you are not sure, list it): diabetes, epilepsy, heart condition, high blood pressure, respiratory condition, HIV positive. If appropriate, add something like the following: "My disability, which is due to a head injury, sometimes makes me appear drunk. I'm not;" "I have a psychiatric disability; in an emergency I may become confused. Help me find a quiet corner and I should be fine in about 10 minutes; if not give me one pill, (name and color of medication) located in my (purse, wallet, pocket, etc.);" "I take Lithium and my blood level needs to be checked every _____;" "My primary language is ASL (American Sign Language). I am deaf and not fluent in English, I will need an ASL interpreter. I read only very simple English."

Make copies of these cards or sheets and place them in clear plastic bags to protect them from the elements.

Life in cramped, unheated shelters can increase the chances of pneumonia, influenza, and colds. Therefore, equip your kits with any vitamins or medications you take to guard against getting sick and to cope with being sick.

If you are a smoker, be aware that smoking will not be allowed in shelters. If getting to an outside smoking area may be difficult for you, consider stocking your evacuation kit with nicotine gum or patches, which may be bought without a prescription.

Keep important equipment and assistive devices in a consistent, convenient, and secured place, so you can quickly and easily locate them after the disaster. Make sure items such as teeth, hearing aids, prostheses, mobility aids, canes, crutches, walkers, respirators, service animal harnesses, augmentative communication devices or electronic communicators, artificial larynxes, wheelchairs, sanitary aids, batteries, eye glasses, contacts including cleaning solutions, etc., are secured. For example: keep hearing aid, eye glasses, etc., in a container attached to your night stand or bed post using string or Velcro. This will help prevent them from falling, flying, or rolling away during a disaster.

The elderly and disabled are especially vulnerable during a storm emergency. Families and support-givers of the elderly and disabled should have a plan in place prior to a storm or emergency to ensure survival of this fragile population. This plan should be well-rehearsed and ready to implement in the event of an emergency.

The Mississippi Division of Medicaid reminds all Medicaid beneficiaries to follow these and other survival safety tips to "Stay Alert and Stay Alive."

The above information is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended to provide the reader with medical advice. If the reader has any questions regarding his or her medical condition, he or she should seek the advice of a physician or other appropriate health care professional.

###