

## Protocol for Providing Medical Supplies and Equipment to Disaster Evacuees

Created: March 23, 2011

Last Update: January 5, 2015

**Applies To:** Persons who evacuate from a disaster area, whether evacuation is voluntary or mandatory, and show up at hospitals and clinics seeking health care supplies and material. Reimbursement may apply to the cost of the supplies and equipment and the cost of the patient visit.

### Does Not Apply To:

- Patients not displaced out of their home community by a disaster;
- Patients seeking diagnostic or therapeutic services other than supplies and equipment;
- Patients seeking pharmaceuticals only.

### Problem Description:

- Evacuees from disaster areas (e.g., flooding) do not always bring with them the supplies and equipment they need for maintaining their health. Examples of missing materials include oxygen tanks, oxygen concentrators, CPAP machines and urinary catheters.
- Patients may be private individuals or part of a group from a congregate living site.
- In many cases the patient may have incomplete documentation of insurance status. Some will not be insured.

### Facilities Seeking State Payment Assistance:

If a health care facility may want to seek reimbursement through the state for provision of medical supplies or equipment, the following steps should be followed:

- 1) Each patient should be registered as a patient.
  - a. In the absence of a prescription, a medical decision will have to be made regarding dispensing of the supplies or equipment. That decision should be made by a health care provider and documented as a prescription.
  - b. Registration ensures that data collection and billing can take place as part of routine facility operations.
- 2) If the patient has insurance (Medicare, Medicaid, private insurance), billing should be made to the insurer. Reasonable effort should be made to ascertain insurance status of those without insurance documentation (e.g., use of Medicaid verify lines).
- 3) If a prescription is given for medical supplies or equipment to be supplied by the facility and the patient is uninsured and unable to pay, the facility may call the NDDoH Department Operations Center (DOC) at [REDACTED] and request authorization to dispense the material under NDDoH emergency health care provisions. The DOC will document those patients for whom approval is given.
- 4) Billing information should be forwarded to the North Dakota Department of Health Emergency Preparedness Section and must include:
  - a. Complete registration information
  - b. Documentation that patient is an evacuee from a disaster area. Community of residence in the registration information collected must be a community sufficiently impacted by disaster that evacuation was reasonable.
- 5) Reimbursement rate: Specified in contract.

- 6) If the material provided includes medical equipment for which NDDoH has an equivalent replacement, NDDoH reserves the right to replace the equipment rather than providing cash reimbursement.