What is the Special Needs Program?

Palm Beach County has established a Special Needs Program to provide care for citizens with certain medical problems during a major emergency. The Special Needs Shelter is a facility with physicians and nurses on staff. It has auxiliary electrical power, is wind resistant, and is not flood-prone.

Space at the shelter is limited. Prioritization is based on need.

Palm Beach County
Department of Public Safety
Division of Emergency Management

For more information, contact:

Special Needs Coordinator

Phone: (561) 712-6400
Fax: (561) 712-6464

www.pbcgov.com/pubsafety/eoc

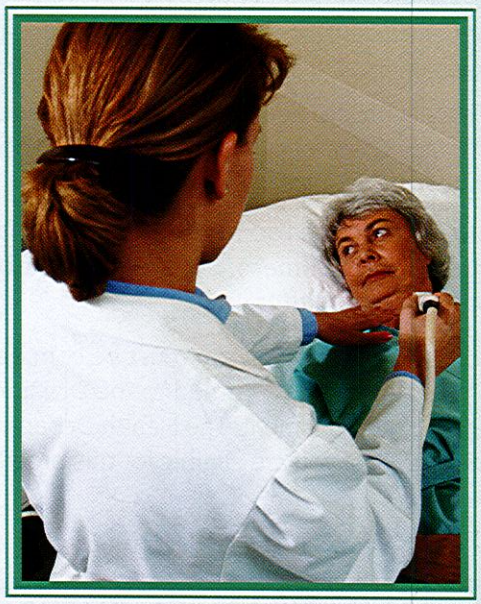
Palm Beach County
Board of County Commissioners

County Administrator
Robert Weisman

In accordance with the provisions of the ADA, this brochure can be made available in an alternate format. Contact Emergency Management at (561) 712-6400.

Rev. 4/09

Palm Beach County Special Needs Program



TEAM Palm Beach County
Together Emergencies are Managed

Palm Beach County
Department of Public Safety
Division of Emergency Management

How to Qualify for the Special Needs Program

Call the Palm Beach County Division of Emergency Management at (561) 712-6400 to request an official application form. To be eligible for "Special" services, you must pre-register and meet the following established criteria:

- Oxygen-dependent residents requiring electricity
- People with minor health/medical conditions that require professional observation and assessment
- People with the need for medications and/or vital sign monitoring and are unable to do so without assistance
- Patients who are too immobile and/or have chronic stable illness, but are not suitable for a regular shelter

The official application form must be completed with your doctor and returned to the Division of Emergency Management. The Health Department will determine if you are eligible for this program.

What to Bring to the Special Needs Shelter

Eligible registrants must bring the following when reporting to the Shelter:

- All personal medications, medical supplies and equipment, including oxygen and oxygen concentrator. **Keep all prescription bottles filled and up-to-date!**
- All special dietary needs for a 5-day stay, including a manual can opener, books, cards, or board games to occupy yourself.
- Accompanying caregivers must bring a chair, air mattress or chaise lounge, blanket, pillow, personal items and clothing. Beds will not be provided for caregivers.

May I Bring a Pet to the Special Needs Shelter?

No. If you have a pet, make shelter arrangements with your veterinarian now.

Transportation

All transportation-dependent Shelter registrants will be advised by telephone to prepare for pick-up by County transportation services.

After the Hurricane

Special Needs Shelter occupants **will not** be released until the area from which they came has been determined safe for their return. Shelter occupants whose homes have been destroyed or rendered unsafe for occupancy will be cared for by the Palm Beach County Division of Human Services, and the Florida Department of Children and Families.

What If I Only Need Transportation to a Regular Shelter?

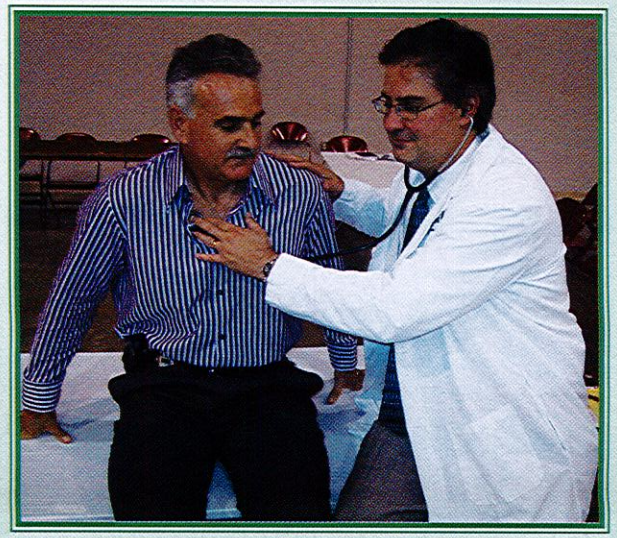
Palm Beach County has established a **Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (DTAP)** to provide transportation to hurricane evacuation shelters for disabled persons who live in an evacuation zone or mobile/manufactured home. In order to be eligible for DTAP, citizens must pre-register and meet the following criteria:

- Live in an evacuation zone or mobile/manufactured home
- Be physically handicapped
- Have no other means of transportation

The transportation service will be assigned based on the information on the registration form.

Please call Palm Tran Connection to register at **(561) 649-9848.**

Alternatives to the Special Needs Shelter

If you do not live in an area which must be evacuated prior to a hurricane and you have certain medical problems, there are alternatives to applying for the Special Needs Program:

- Talk to your doctor about your sheltering alternatives.
- Install impact-resistant hurricane shutters.
- Install or retro-brace garage doors for wind resistance.
- Reinforce roof trusses or roof framing systems.
- Make arrangements with your oxygen vendor for an adequate supply of portable oxygen cylinders to sustain you in the event you lose electrical service.
- Buy a portable generator.
- Buy insulin that does not require refrigeration (with your doctor's approval).
- Designate a safe room such as a bathroom or a large interior closet and stock up on supplies.