



# Emergency Planning for People with Disability

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# Objectives of the Presentation

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- **Debunk the disability mystic**
- **Understand the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and what accommodation and accessibility means in emergency planning**
- **Understand the pros and cons of registries**
- **Understand how to develop a culture of preparedness in your communities**

# Debunking Disability

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- What is disability
- Person first language
- Age does not make a person vulnerable, health does

# Definition of "Special Needs Population"

**"Any individual, group or community whose circumstances create barriers to obtaining or understanding information, or the ability to react as the general population has been requested to proceed during all phases of emergency management. Circumstances that may create barriers include, but are not limited to: age, physical, mental, emotional or cognitive status, cultural, ethnic, religion, language, citizenship or socio-economic status."**

Approved by the Public Health Preparedness Advisory Committee on January 25, 2006 to be used for the Iowa Public Health Preparedness Program.

# Emergency Management and Title II of the ADA

- Requires that programs, services, and activities directly provided by state and local governments, and third parties must be accessible to people with disabilities
- The ADA also requires making reasonable accommodations to policies, practices, and procedures when necessary to avoid discrimination against people with disabilities

# Emergency Management and Title II of the ADA

- The ADA generally does not require state or local emergency management programs to fundamentally change operations or impose undue financial and administrative hardships

# What does this mean?

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- Preparation - advanced planning for emergencies and disasters
- Notification – Alerting the public to an emergency and what to do
- Evacuation and returning home
- Emergency sheltering
- Access to Social Services, temporary housing and other benefit programs
- Recovery

# What You need to know

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- Organizational capability-what you can do
- Proficiency-how well can you do it
- Deployment-how fast can you do it



# Preparation

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- Don't plan for people with disability, plan with them
- People with disabilities can be your most valuable resource in planning for all levels of emergency management

# Registries

- Define the purpose for the registry and who maintains the data
- Pros: can identify number and needs of people with disability
- Cons: can be labor intensive and costly. You have to be at home at the time of disaster. Does not identify people with disability that are visiting the area. It is always out of date
- Legal considerations
- Transportation disadvantaged

# HIPAA

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- Health and Insurance Portability and Accountability Act – Privacy Rule
- “Emergency entities” can exchange information.
- Best to get a verbal authorization
- [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov) go to Office of Civil Rights HIPAA



Do you know the hazards in our community?

Photo courtesy of NOD

# Notification

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- Combine visual and audible methods
- Pre-registered auto-dial TTY messages, emails, text pager or PDA
- Qualified sign language interpreters on local TV stations
- Relay Iowa 711 or 800-735-2942
- Video relay through broadband
- Closed caption

# Evacuation and Transportation

- Identify accessible forms of evacuation and transportation
  - Lift-equipped school buses, transit buses, or Para transit
  - Don't assume you are the only one in the area needing these resources
  - People may need assistance leaving their homes and returning



Not an effective plan

Photo courtesy of NOD

# Emergency Shelter

- The ADA generally requires that people with disabilities receive the same benefits - food, shelter, medical care and the support from friends and family
- Shelters need accessible parking, entrance, common areas, dining, sleeping and toilet/shower areas.
- ADA homepage has toolkits and checklists – [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)
- Department of Justice technical assistance (800) 514-0301 (voice)



# Barriers

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- Identify barriers, work with building owners to make accommodations
- Provide an alternative site until an accessible building is identified

# Service Animals

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- Definition
- Service Animals do not have to be licensed or certified
- Never be separated from their human partner
- Unless they pose a threat or undue hardship

# Sheltering and Service Animals

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- Shelter staff can only ask two questions:
  - Do you need this animal due to a disability
  - What tasks or work has this animal been trained to perform
  - If the answers reveal it has been trained to work or perform tasks for a person with a disability it qualifies as a service animal



**SPECIAL NEEDS  
EVACUEES  
CARE GIVERS  
MEDICAL STAFF**



Photo courtesy of NOD

# Special Needs/Medical Needs Shelters

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- Must be staffed with doctors, nurses and trained staff
- Best case scenario, pre-established transfer locations and locations of the same level of care are secured before a disaster

# Transfer Trauma

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- Results when clients are uprooted from routine and surroundings
- Increase of agitation, depression, illness and risk of death
- Relocation can put health and life at considerable risk
- Time to safely transfer is underestimated



Are there enough resources?

Photo courtesy of NOD

# Emergency Information Cards

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- Name tags for clients including recent photo
- Medical, diet and physical information
- Contact information
- Assistive devices needs



# Access to Social Services

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- State and local governments that provide services must be accessible
- Applications must be in accessible format
- Crisis Counseling must have alternative forms of communicating
- Temporary housing must be accessible

# Recovery

- Repairs and reconstruction must include accessibility
- Temporary facilities that offer public services must be accessible
- This include path of travel, telephone, drinking fountains, bathrooms
- Provide guidance on reputable contractors and debris removal



Do you have a plan?

Photo courtesy of NOD

# Complete a Personal Assessment

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- My capabilities now
- Assistance I will need after a disaster
- Maintain an emergency information card
- Determine if shelter in place is the best option, plan to self sustain for 72 hours or more

# Emergency supply kit



# Vision

- Evacuation without auditory cues if electricity fails
- Navigate through debris
- Raised and Braille signage for directions to exit routes
- Two-way communication system in elevators and rescue area
- Emergency lighting along escape routes
- Personal support network to act as site guide

# Hearing

- Practice having people communicate emergency information to you
- Locations of text telephones or phones that have amplification
- Emergency alarm systems should have audible and visual features
- Portable alert devices
- Carry a small flashlight pen and paper
- How will you communicate if there is no interpreter
- Pre-printed messages

# Speech

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- How will you communicate with co-workers and emergency personnel if you do not have usual communication devices
- Do you have pre-printed copies of words or messages specific to emergencies in your desk, wallet or purse
- Have a health emergency card that explains the best way to communicate with you



# Memory, judgment, learning

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- Keep plans simple, written or pictorial
- Anticipate many types of reactions which would include confusion, panic, fear, and anxiety. How will you communicate
- List on your emergency health card how to best assist you
- Practice on how to communicate

# Physical/Mobility

- Know all exits and how to navigate them
- Can you evacuate independently
- Know where evac chairs are stored and how to use them
- Know where and how to activate alarms
- Give quick instruction
- Know where areas of refuge/rescue are located
- Know if evacuation elevators are available

# Allergies, Chemical Sensitivities

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- Have supplies based on your worst days, gloves, inhaler, gas-mist filters
- Make sure your emergency health information clearly explains your sensitivities and reactions, most helpful treatments and most harmful
- Be specific or you may be diagnosed and treated with something other than chemical sensitivity

# Assistive Devices

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- Can you get your wheelchair or other assistive devices out of the building
- Have you instructed your personal support network how to operate and safely move your equipment
- Label your equipment with contact information
- What are your options if you are unable to evacuate with your assistive devices

# Where to find additional information

- **ADA Homepage**  
[www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)
- **American Red Cross**  
[www.prepare.org](http://www.prepare.org) • [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)  
call your local chapter
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency**  
<http://www.fema.gov/preparedness/> • (800)480-2520 (voice)
- **National Organization on Disability**  
[www.nod.org/emergency](http://www.nod.org/emergency)  
(202)293-5960 (voice) • (202)293-5968 (TTY)
- **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**  
[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) • (800)BE READY (voice) • (800)464-6161 (TTY)

# Contact Information for the Office of Disability and Health

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<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/cdor.asp>

[http://www.idph.state.ia.us/bhpl/disability\\_health.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/bhpl/disability_health.asp)