

## **Long-Term Care Facility Emergency Preparedness Questions** **For Families To Ask and Employees to Know**

- ◆ Does the facility have an emergency backup power system? How long will it provide power, and what parts of the facility will have power?
- ◆ How will residents who are using oxygen be provided with oxygen if the concentrators in their rooms are not working? How much emergency oxygen is available in portable cylinders?
- ◆ In the event of a fire or other need to evacuate the building, where will the residents go if the weather is bad? Frail elderly people cannot stand in a parking lot for hours on a freezing cold night, a 100 degree plus day, or when it is pouring rain.
- ◆ If the building is multi-level and the elevators cannot be used, what is the procedure for evacuating physically impaired residents quickly and safely down the stairs?
- ◆ If the building must be evacuated quickly, what procedures are in place to insure that no resident wanders away while caregivers are rounding up and helping other residents?
- ◆ If there is time to prepare for an evacuation, such as when a hurricane is expected, how and to where will residents be moved?
- ◆ What permanent identification will residents wear?
- ◆ How will the facility insure that medications and charts move on the same vehicle as the resident so that they do not become separated? Will a trained employee ride with residents on each vehicle to administer medications as necessary?
- ◆ Will an emergency food and water supply be available on each vehicle for residents who are being moved?
- ◆ How will families be notified that residents are being evacuated?
- ◆ How does the facility train their care staff? Routine fire drills are nice, but they are far from enough.

## **Evaluating The Answers**

- ◆ Ask the questions when you meet with the Administrator of the facility. Don't rely on the marketing representative. Some marketing representatives tend to make up answers as they go along.
- ◆ Then confirm the Administrator's answers by asking an aide or three what they are assigned to do in the event of a particular emergency. Pick a specific situation, such as a power outage, evacuating without an elevator, or if residents have to be driven away from the facility. If you don't get more or less the same answer from each aide you have cause for concern.
- ◆ Finally, ask your questions of employees on different shifts. There will be fewer people working on the deep night shift. How will they manage all their residents with fewer employees if there is a night emergency?

Source: <http://www.eldercareteam.com/resources/newsletter.htm>