

The History of Safe Refuge

Carteret General Hospital has been offering Safe Refuge to county residents since the early 1980's. Residents with a caregiver could come to the hospital to have refrigeration of their medications, power to operate their medical equipment, etc.

However, during Hurricane Bonnie in 1998, the hospital had over 400 people in a facility of only 117 beds. It became clear that if the county suffered a devastating direct hit from a hurricane, there would be no room or resources for the many new patients who would require immediate care. Additionally, resources in the hospital must last throughout the disaster, which may last long after the storm is over, as we saw with the flooding after Hurricane Floyd.

Since 1998, a multidisciplinary committee has been meeting to find a solution to the growing Safe Refuge need. The group felt that a Special Needs Shelter was the answer. With cooperation from many agencies, the Special Needs Shelter has become a reality.

Through funding granted by the Carteret-Craven EMC Foundation, Carteret County Commissioners and the Carteret General Hospital Board, a generator was purchased and installed at the Leon Mann Senior Center.

The center is totally accessible for those with special needs and will allow power throughout the building for operation of medical equipment.

Because emergency times stretch available resources in Carteret County, the first and best option is to plan ahead and use any and all resources available through families, friends and neighborhoods.

Regular Red Cross County Shelters

These shelters are for residents whose homes are physically threatened by storm winds and/or water. There is no smoking allowed inside the shelters, so oxygen use is safe. There is also intermittent power available by generators. These shelters are located at:

- Atlantic Elementary School
151 School Drive, Atlantic
- Newport Elementary School
219 Chatham Street, Newport
- West Carteret High School
4700 Country Club Road, Morehead City
- White Oak Elementary School
555 Hwy 24, Cape Carteret

Hospital Care

Doctors orders are required for individuals who require skilled nursing services at the hospital. These orders must include the patient's name, date of birth, address and phone number as well as medications, diet, physical activity and any other special needs. These orders must be faxed to the Admissions office of Carteret General Hospital at 252-1626.

Special Needs Shelter

In cooperation with the Mayors Committee for Persons with Disabilities, the Information & Referral Line office of the hospital collects information which is entered into a database of those with medical needs and disabilities. Medical professionals then prioritize those who can utilize:

- other private resources (family, friends)
- a regular Red Cross/County Shelter
- the Special Needs Shelter
- the Hospital (requiring acute care)

The Special Needs Shelter is for people who are usually cared for at home but have special/medical needs during a disaster. It is preferred that individuals bring a caregiver with them to the shelter. Additionally, individuals must bring all their medications, any special diet foods and all medical equipment (nebulizer, oxygen, etc.).

The Special Needs Shelter located at the Leon Mann Senior Center, 3820 Galantis Street, Morehead City, will open after the official announcement of a Hurricane Watch by the Carteret Co. Emergency Management Director. It will close immediately following the hurricane.

