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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 24, 2010

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AGENCY FOR HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATION ENSURES HEALTH CARE FACILITIES ARE PREPARED FOR 2010 HURRICANE SEASON

~Facilities must update the State's Emergency Status System~

TALLAHASSEE – With the start of the 2010 Hurricane Season, the Agency for Health Care Administration (Agency) asked all health care facilities to update their facility statistics and contact information in the Agency's Emergency Status System (ESS). Health care facilities providing residential or inpatient services must utilize the ESS online database to report information regarding their emergency status, planning and operations. As of June 2010, 4,286 facilities have enrolled. The Agency also asked health care facilities to review emergency management plans to make certain their facilities are ready in case of an emergency.

"Florida is a leader among all states in emergency management preparedness for health care facilities," said Tom Arnold, Secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration. "The beginning of hurricane season is a reminder that it is critically important for health care facilities to be well prepared to manage a variety of emergencies."

The ESS allows the Agency to track the status of health care facilities, including hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, in-patient hospices and all other 24-hour care providers, during an emergency situation. Prior to an event, the ESS allows health care facilities to report their emergency contact and basic facility information, such as number of licensed beds and population statistics. During an event, facilities can use the ESS to report evacuation status, condition of special needs residents, available beds, structural damage, equipment, staff and supply needs, generator problems, and other issues that affect their ability to provide services.

The ESS also gives facilities the ability to report the type of transportation they will utilize to evacuate patients in case of an emergency, which allows the Agency and emergency management personnel to monitor resources and help identify any issues that may occur.

"It is crucial during an emergency that health care facilities can continue to provide quality care for Floridians," said David Halstead, Director of the Florida Department of Emergency Management. "The ESS permits facilities to work quickly and effectively with state and local emergency management teams so responses can be prioritized."

In addition to requesting facilities update their information in the ESS, the Agency has recommended these preparation steps:

- Test emergency generators to confirm they are working properly.



- Check for access to a sufficient supply of drinking water, non-perishable foods, batteries, fuel, oxygen and other supplies to provide quality care during a crisis.
- Review emergency management plan with current staff members.

For more information on regulations regarding emergency preparedness, please visit www.AHCA.MyFlorida.com.

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The Agency for Health Care Administration is committed to better health care for all Floridians. The Agency administers Florida's Medicaid program, licenses and regulates more than 41,000 health care facilities and 43 health maintenance organizations, and publishes health care data and statistics on FloridaHealthFinder.gov. For more information, please visit AHCA.MyFlorida.com.