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Functional Needs Support Services in General Population Shelters will Ensure Disaster Preparedness among Arizonans

The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) has made major progress in disaster preparedness by supporting functional and access needs populations. Working with the Arizona Statewide Independent Living Council (AZSILC), ADHS recently purchased durable medical equipment, adaptive equipment and other supplies to help approximately 1,000 people in general population shelters cope with disabilities during an emergency.

“These beds, supplies and other needed equipment will break down barriers and help integrate people with functional needs into the same shelters as the rest of their families,” said Tony DiRienzi, AZ SILC Executive Director. “The state’s leadership in addressing this critical issue demonstrates its care and concern for all Arizonans.”

Last year, the Federal Emergency Management Agency released standards for state and local governments regarding the integration of Functional Needs Support Services in general population shelters. Arizona is one of the first western states to implement these recommendations in a comprehensive manner. The project includes interagency planning, as well as equipment and training for healthcare organizations to improve understanding of functional needs during a disaster response.

“This project not only helps people with functional and access needs during disasters, it helps us all,” said Teresa Ehnert, Chief of the ADHS Bureau of Public Health Emergency Preparedness. “By keeping people with simple support needs – such as oxygen or a specialized bed – out of the hospitals, our healthcare workers can concentrate on treating people that need immediate attention. It’s also important to keep families together during a disaster. We can do that by making sure we can meet many functional support needs in general shelters.”

This initiative was led by Ehnert and funded by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Hospital Preparedness Program.

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About Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS)

People that require FNSS may have physical, sensory, mental health, cognitive and/or intellectual disabilities. Other people that may also benefit from FNSS include women in the late stages of pregnancy, elderly, and people requiring bariatric equipment. Visit www.azsilc.org to find statewide resources for functional needs populations. For more information on disabilities and disaster preparedness, go to www.fema.gov/about/odc/

Examples of Equipment Purchased



E-Bed Systems Stainless Steel Bariatric Transport Chair/Bed

Folds Flat Electric Actuator runs chair back up and down by a push of a button lean back your patient to different reclined positions. No more lifting or struggling with oversize patients 750LBS. Capacity Stainless Steel construction 4 locking wheels for safety. Side bed rails are removable



Medical Field Cot with IV Pole

Length 83 In., Width 33 In., Height 30 In., Material of Construction Metal/Fabric, Blue, 550 lb. Weight Capacity, Includes (1) Mattress Pad, (1) IV Pole, (1) Foot Adjustment, (1) Head Adjustment, (2) Drop Down Side Rails