PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES –
A CHECKLIST FOR COMMUNITY MEDICAL PRACTICES

PRACTICE EMERGENCY PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Planning
☐ Conduct hazard and risk assessments to identify likely threats to practice operations and prioritize planning based on probability and anticipated impact.
☐ Develop strategies to mitigate or reduce disaster impact on practice operations.
☐ Coordinate with health system and public health agency plans.
☐ Complete emergency planning for the practice to include:
  - Identification of command structure and roles and responsibilities for emergency operations.
  - Outline of plan for life-safety emergencies in facility.
  - Protection of medical records.
  - Protection of medical and non-medical supplies, including vaccines.
  - Continuity of operations, in the event of staff or supply shortages, or loss of access to facility.
  - Surge in demand for clinical services.

Communications
☐ Develop plan to communicate with staff regarding practice operations and sign up for local and state health alert networks.
☐ Develop plan for communication with:
  - Public health department.
  - Local emergency management agency.
  - Health system, local hospitals, local practices and clinics.
☐ Develop plan to communicate with patients before and during disasters:
  - Add disaster-related information to voicemail and website.
  - Use social media to convey status of practice and disaster-related recommendations.

Training and Exercises
☐ Train all new staff in practice emergency plans and procedures and annually provide updates for all staff.
☐ Plan drills to test elements of the plan, including coordination with local health system and government agencies.
☐ Evaluate plan and staff performance; revise plan as appropriate.

PREPARING PATIENTS WITH SPECIAL HEALTHCARE NEEDS FOR DISASTERS

☐ Use electronic record to develop panel or registry of high-risk patients who are vulnerable in disasters; those with chronic medical conditions, access and mobility challenges, reliance on assistive technology, and/or nutritional or respiratory support.
☐ Plan for targeted communications and outreach to these patients during and after disasters, using a range of communication channels.
☐ Provide patients with care summaries containing list of current diagnoses, medications and other up-to-date information after each encounter.
☐ Review key elements of disaster planning during medical encounters with high-risk patients.
☐ Encourage patients to:
  - Sign up for government special needs registries, enhanced 911 services, utility company priority lists, emergency notification and early warning systems, where available.
  - Plan for fire safety: smoke alarms, escape routes from each room with accommodations for wheelchairs if necessary; inclusion of caregivers, schools, and workplaces in plans.
  - Plan for electricity outage: generator, car battery, 12-volt inverter for automobiles.
  - Plan with durable medical equipment companies for equipment failure, back-up supplies.
  - Maintain a minimum one week supply of medications, medical supplies, food and water, pet food.
  - Prepare a “go-kit”: contact lists, medicines and supplies, insurance cards, medical information summary.