



Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kentucky Public Health Sends Nurses to Help in Hurricane Irma Recovery

Public health could provide variety of services to affected areas

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sep. 14, 2017) – A Nurse “Strike Team” from Kentucky is on its way to help Hurricane Irma victims in Florida. It’s the first time Kentucky has been asked to send a team of nurses to another state following a disaster. Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH), within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), along with local, state and federal officials coordinated today’s deployment. The team will be in Florida for about two weeks.

Kentucky’s Nurse Strike Team consists of 10 registered nurses and two administrative staff members from the Franklin County Health Department, the Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness, the Northern Kentucky Health Department and the Kentucky Department for Public Health. They will be working in a medical needs shelter in Orlando but may be redeployed to another location in Florida as needed.

“The deployment of this team of public health nurses is a great reflection of how we continue to move the needle forward to a new level for public health,” said CHFS

Secretary Vickie Yates Brown Glisson. “It validates all of the preparation and training this group has gone through. I commend them and thank them for their compassionate service.”

The strike team will augment staff to provide medical support to people who were displaced from their homes and are currently residing in medical needs shelters. The individuals housed in these shelters have medical needs and are in relatively stable condition but have a chronic disease or condition such as diabetes or require oxygen or dialysis. Nurses will be conducting history and physical exams, providing patient assessments, assisting with medicine administration and providing general nursing care and comfort for these individuals.

“It is my duty as a nurse to provide support to these individuals who may have been displaced and have medical challenges,” said Amber Vittitoe, public health nurse with Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness. “I am deeply honored to be chosen for this opportunity to help others in need.”

Public health environmental health specialists and support personnel have also been identified and are prepared to deploy if requested to address critical public health issues including: food safety, food salvage and disposal, food and water-related illness, clean water sources, water sampling, solid waste water system analysis and mosquito control.

“Kentucky stands willing and able to provide assistance to those areas affected by the storm,” concluded Hiram C. Polk, Jr., M.D., commissioner of DPH. “We have been actively preparing to deploy our personnel and assets to address critical health issues in medical needs shelters.”

A video from today’s Nurse Strike Team deployment is available [here](#) and can be used by media outlets. Raw video footage of today’s deployment is also available.

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The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the

Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.