



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Public Health Sends Nurses to Help in Hurricane Florence Recovery**

*Public health to provide variety of services to affected areas*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sep. 16, 2018)** – A Nurse “Strike Team” from Kentucky is on its way to help Hurricane Florence victims in Hurricane Florence affected areas in North Carolina. 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 North Carolina for about two weeks.

Kentucky’s Nurse Strike Team consists of nine registered nurses and two administrative staff members from the Lexington-Fayette County Health Department, Louisville Metro Public Health and Wellness, Bracken County Health Department, Department of Insurance and the Kentucky Department for Public Health. They will be working in local shelters in Hurricane Florence-impacted areas of North Carolina.

“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 Adam Meier. “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 general or medical needs shelters. The individuals housed in the medical support 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.

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 Jeffrey Howard, 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.”

“Our team of nurses will be providing compassionate medical and psychological care to those displaced in shelters from the hurricane-damaged areas in North Carolina,” said Angela Kik, nurse strike team leader at DPH. “Our volunteers have a calling to provide this type of assistance to our neighboring states in need.”

Assistance requests are coordinated and authorized through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), which is a mutual aid agreement between states and territories in the United States. It enables states to share resources during natural and man-made disasters. Under EMAC agreements, the requesting state reimburses all associated costs incurred by the provider state. Kentucky Emergency Management (KYEM) is the managing authority for deployment of all Kentucky teams and assets.

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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, the Department for Aging and Independent Living 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.*