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Preparing To Help Those Who Most Need It In An Emergency

FAYETTEVILLE – In an effort to be proactive in a community disaster or emergency, the Cumberland County Department of Social Services is creating a registry of people in our community who have handicaps or medical disabilities. This registry will be a great resource to Emergency Management personnel in a weather-related or other emergency when making decisions about where to open shelters and where to implement rescue operations.

A Special Medical Needs Registry Form is being placed on the county's website, www.co.cumberland.nc.us, for people who have special medical needs to print out and complete, or to have a family member or friend complete on their behalf. The form should then be mailed to the Department of Social Services to be added to the registry of names and addresses. Such pre-planning could mean a life-saving difference should a disaster occur.

In addition to being available on Cumberland County's website, the Special Medical Needs Registry Form also will be available at the Adult Services Reception Desk on the first floor of the Department of Social Services Building, 1225 Ramsey St. and will be distributed and filled out forms can be turned in at the Senior Health Fair at DSS on May 10, from 8:30 to noon.

The idea to create such a registry came from the Division of Aging and Adult Services of the Department of Health and Human Services. The form itself was created with the input of professionals from the Department of Social Services, Emergency Management, and the Cumberland County Coordinating Council on Older Adults, as well as the Mid Carolina Area Agency on Aging. However, the form is not intended only for senior citizens with special medical needs; citizens of any age with a special medical need can be added to the registry.

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