



Health & Safety Alert #21-8-03

Emergencies - Accessing Help & Initiating CPR

Accessing Help in Emergencies

Individuals with developmental disabilities, whether they live independently or are part of a household, may encounter times when immediate assistance is needed from emergency responders, such as police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS/ambulance). Review of MUIs revealed that at times it might be necessary for individuals who are receiving services to summon these resources themselves.

Understanding how and when to dial 9-1-1 should be an integral part of training for emergencies for all individuals and staff. This can be part of meeting Medicaid standards for safety programs.

In some localities, the 9-1-1 services are able to accept special information about a household that would assist the emergency responders. Examples of such information include hearing or speech impairment, ambulation ability, special medical conditions, or the location of a bedroom.

We suggest that you contact the 9-1-1 oversight agency or local law enforcement to provide such information regarding an individual residing at a specific address if you determine it could facilitate response to emergency calls. Oversight agencies vary by locality, and include county and city government and public safety departments (police, sheriff, fire).

It is also important for staff to understand when they should call 9-1-1. Training should be provided to help staff to recognize circumstances in which a call to 9-1-1 is needed *prior* to a call to the nurse or physician. Training should also be provided to help nurses to recognize circumstances in which the nurse should instruct the staff to call 9-1-1, prior to the nurse assessing the individual in person. Nurses should also be aware of their ability to call 9-1-1 prior to notifying the physician when they recognize an emergency situation.

The individuals who are receiving services should also be included in training regarding how to access help in emergencies and calling 9-1-1.

Emergency Contact Information

Emergency contact information (9-1-1, ambulance, police, fire, nurse, physician, family, etc.) should be posted near the phone for easy access.

Initiating CPR

Situations where CPR is needed are often chaotic and stressful. Regular training and practice help staff to respond appropriately in these situations and begin CPR if indicated. Each year supervisors should periodically ensure staff know what to do and when, and to define the roles of direct care staff and nursing staff.

For questions or comments regarding the above Alert, please contact the MUI/Registry Unit at (614) 995-3810.