

LOUISIANA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 5, 2008

Department of Health and Hospitals News Update

**DHH Issues Memorandum to Hospitals, Nursing Homes Regarding Patient
Repatriation**

BATON ROUGE -- The following memo was sent today to Louisiana health care facilities.

Memorandum

To: Louisiana Health Care Facilities

From: Alan Levine, Secretary, Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals

Re: Requirements for reoccupying and reopening procedures following emergency events

Date: September 5, 2008

In the wake of Hurricane Gustav, the Department of Health and Hospitals has established repatriation of patients and residents of Louisiana hospitals and nursing homes as a top priority. We are committed to helping facilities repatriate special needs patients and residents as swiftly as possible to ensure patient safety and comfort, as well as to free up capacity in health care facilities throughout the state.

We cannot allow needless bureaucracy to impede the return of patients and residents to familiar surroundings and are willing to partner with you to speed the process of repatriation. This commitment requires a high level of responsibility on the part of health care providers in being forthcoming with the state about the status and condition of their facilities. While we will not allow red tape to slow the repatriation process, we will hold facilities responsible for the conditions to which they return patients.

This memorandum applies to any healthcare facility that evacuates, temporarily relocates or temporarily ceases operation at its licensed location in an emergency event and supersedes any previously issued guidelines.

I. If the healthcare facility has not sustained any damage to the licensed location as a result of the emergency event, AND there was no power outage of more than 48 hours at the licensed location as a result of the emergency event, the healthcare facility may re-open/re-occupy at its licensed location and shall notify DHH Health Standards Section (HSS) within 24 hours of reopening. (can be done by facsimile to HSS).

II. For all other evacuations, temporary relocations or temporary cessation of operations at its licensed location the healthcare facility shall notify DHH Health Standards Sections with a request to re-occupy the licensed facility. The request shall include:

- a. report of damage to the facility,
- b. the extent and duration of any power outages,

- c. the number of patient/clients that the facility plans to re-enter the facility,
- d. staffing availability,
- e. ability to access emergency or hospital services that are operational in the area (if applicable), and,
- f. availability to access and obtain food, potable water, medications and all other necessary supplies for care of the patients/clients.

End Stage Renal Disease facilities (ESRD) shall follow the technical considerations for bringing an ESRD facility back on line posted on Network 13 website: <http://www.network13.org> regarding flushing and disinfecting of systems, flushing and water testing. Verification that the process was followed shall be submitted with the request to re-open.

After review of the submitted documentation, DHH Health Standards Section shall make a determination for one of the following actions:

- I. an approval to re-open/re-occupy without survey; or
- II. what surveys will be required before an approval to reopen will be granted. Such surveys may include OPH, Fire Marshall and Health Standards; or,
- III. denial of re-opening.

The purpose of these surveys is to assure that the facility is in compliance with licensing standards including, but not limited to, the structural soundness of the building, sanitation code, staffing requirements and the execution of emergency plans.

The Health Standards Section, in coordination with state and parish OHSEP, will determine the facility's access to the community service infrastructure, including hospitals, transportation, physicians, professional services and necessary supplies.

The Health Standards Section will give top priority to reopening surveys.

Please send requests to re-open/re-occupy healthcare facility to:

Health Standards Section
500 Laurel St. Suite 100
Baton Rouge, HSS Fax #'s: 225-342-5292 or 225-342-0157