



MARYLAND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS NETWORK

Helping Maryland's Most Vulnerable

MD EPN NETWORK QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The summer brings wonderful opportunities to gather outdoors with family and friends, explore nature or visit local beaches and lakes, cultivate flower and vegetable gardens, and boost our intake of the “sunshine vitamin.” As we usher in the summer, now is an excellent time to prepare for the season’s potential for drought, sizzling high temperatures, and the power grid capacity shortfalls accompanying energy use spikes. Are you prepared to face power outages amid a summer heat wave? Here are some tips that you can consider:

- Identify places in your community where you can go to get relaxed, such as libraries or shopping centers. A listing of cooling centers can be found [here](#). Cover windows with drapes or shades.
- Do not rely on fans as your primary cooling device. Fans create air flow and a false sense of comfort but do not reduce body temperature or prevent heat-related illnesses.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated.
- Take cool showers or baths. Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Watch for heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.
- Check on family members, seniors, and neighbors.

Continued on Page 2

Newsletter Highlights

- A Message from the Executive Director
- Summer Weather Safety
- Operation Locked Out - A Tabletop Exercise on Cyber Security
- Personal Preparedness: Your Emergency Binder
- Healthcare Planning: Advance Directives
- Public Health Alerts



Helping Maryland's Most Vulnerable



MARYLAND
Department of Health
Office of Preparedness and Response

- If you cannot afford your cooling costs, weatherization, or energy-related home repairs, contact the Income Home Energy Assistance Program ([LIHEAP](#)). The Maryland Office of Home Energy Programs ([OHEP](#)) has additional energy and water assistance programs available in Maryland.

Wishing you a happy and safe summer season!

Best,

Caitlin

Caitlin Houck, RN, MS
Executive Director, MNCHA



The summer months bring a variety of severe weather threats to the Mid-Atlantic region - severe thunderstorms, tornado watches, flash flood warnings, and hurricanes. We will take a closer look at preparedness tips for hurricanes and tornadoes, understanding that there is often less lead time when facing the latter type of emergency.

Hurricanes

Hurricane season began on June 1 and will end on November 30. What can you do to prepare your company, your clients, and yourself for hurricanes? Hurricanes can bring several types of weather-related hazards. It is vital to follow weather alerts and plans. How do you stay safe afterward? For more information, check out the following resources:

- The Red Cross covers these topics [here](#).
- Weather.gov also has tips on Hurricane Hazards [here](#).
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provides a brief overview of hurricane safety; click [here](#).

Tornadoes

The [National Weather Services \(NWS\)](#) sends out alerts for Tornado watches and Tornado warnings. The Red Cross recommends going to a safe space immediately. [Ready.gov](#) has a dedicated page for tornadoes and provides tornado emergency prep tips.



- (1) [Prepare for Tornadoes](#)
- (2) [Stay Safe During a Tornado](#), and
- (3) [Stay Safe After a Tornado](#).

MD EPN is your source for inclement weather alerts in advance of storms, but be sure to also stay tuned to your local weather for instant coverage during weather emergencies. Sign up for the weather alerts [here](#).

Operation Locked-Out: A Tabletop Exercise on Cyber Security



On May 18th, the Maryland EPN welcomed Barbara Citarella, RN, BSN, MS, CHCE, NHDP-BC, as the host of its 2022 Emergency Preparedness Tabletop Exercise. We were so grateful to return to an in-person educational event for the first time since 2019, and there were more than 60 attendees across the home health, hospice, and home care industries! We want to extend a special thanks to our partners at the Maryland Department of Health Office of Preparedness and Response and to Nicole Brown, MPH, Acting Deputy Director, and Healthcare Preparedness Program Manager, who was able to participate in the event. Having a spectrum of stakeholders participate in this community-based exercise helps represent a broad view of the opportunities and challenges we face in emergency planning.

These forums allow us to learn from one another's experiences as we evaluate our organization's response plans. It is an example of collective learning and demonstrates a "whole community" emergency response! The day's discussions highlighted the following as challenges and strengths among community-based providers coordinating an emergency response to a cybersecurity attack:

Challenges:

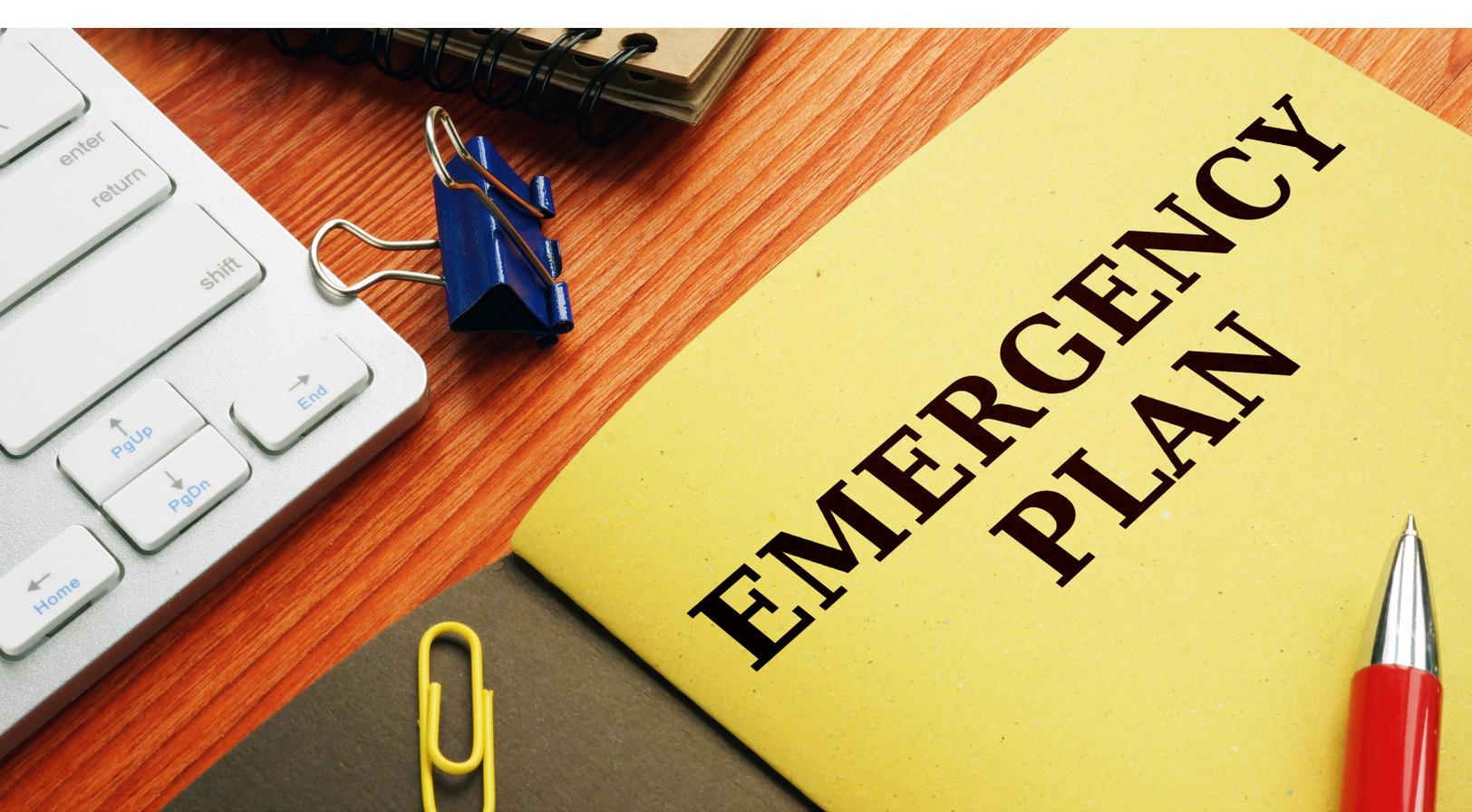
- Raising the index of suspicion and situational awareness
- Having money available for operational essential functions for the duration of the event and post-event recovery
- Reliance on outside vendors to host the organization's data
- The expertise and communication "gaps" between clinical and IT professionals.... how do we bridge this gap and learn to speak a more similar language?

Strengths:

- Our industry's demonstrated ability to adapt!
- Interprofessional organizations with in-house support to problem-solve
- Dedicated leadership
- Opportunities to examine and diversify vendors

One of the day's main takeaways was ensuring that your organization has a robust HIPAA Business Associate Agreement (BAA). The BAA is a critical tool that can help protect healthcare providers and the PHI of their patients in the event of a data breach. There are multiple layers to these agreements, so your organization must be clear about its contractual and sub-contractual relationships with internal and external IT providers and support networks that store your agency's PHI. For more information about BAAs and health information privacy, click [here](#).





PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS: YOUR EMERGENCY BINDER

How do you prepare for the worst-case scenario? If something were to happen to you, would your family be able to obtain necessary access to your health information?

In addition to creating a [family emergency plan](#), taking steps to create a binder with copies of your essential documents ensures everything you need is in one place. Establishing your identity and replacing important documents is often challenging without the necessary documentation. Preparing this binder can also help family members or friends who may suddenly access your information in the event of severe illness or death. This information should include advance directives, living wills, titles, bank accounts, and necessary medical and financial information on family members and pets. You may also consider scanning your documents and keeping them on a secure flash drive as an extra measure to keep your important documents safe.

Resources for Creating Your Emergency Binder

[Ready.Gov](#)

[The Savvy Sparrow: Emergency Binder: Why You Need One, Plus Documents and Checklist](#)

[Oak Hill Homestead: How to Make an Emergency Grab & Go Binder](#)

[Thirty Hand-Made Days: Printable Updated Family Binder](#)

ADVANCE HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVE

INSTRUCTIONS

Part 1 of this form lets you name another individual as agent to make health care decisions if you become incapable of making your own decisions, or if you want someone else to make those decisions for you now even though you are still capable. You may also name an alternate agent to act for you if your first choice is not willing, able, or reasonably available to make decisions for you.

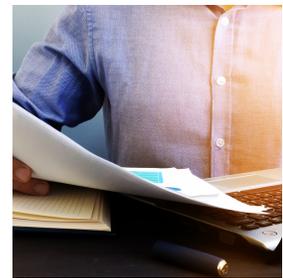
Your agent may not be your supervising health care provider. Your agent also may not be a health care provider, an employee of a health care facility or a residential care facility where you are receiving care, or an employee of a health care institution where you are receiving care, unless such person is related to you.

Unless you specify otherwise on this form, your agent will have the right to:

1. Consent to or refuse any care, treatment, service, or procedure to maintain, diagnose, or cure a physical or mental condition.
2. Select or change health care providers and institutions.
3. Approve or disapprove diagnostic tests, medical procedures, and programs of medical treatment.
4. Direct the provision, withholding, or withdrawal of artificial nutrition and hydration and all other health care, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
5. Donate organs or tissues, authorize an autopsy, and direct the disposition of remains.

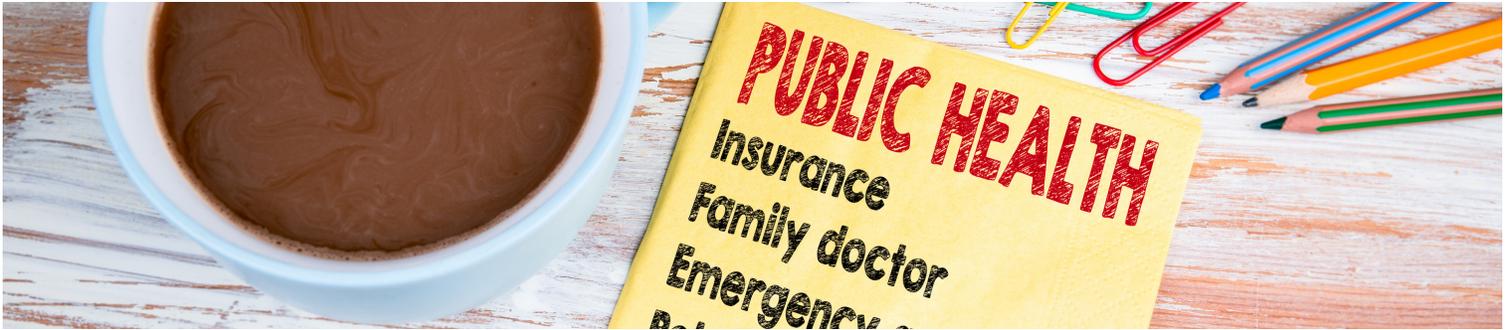
HEALTHCARE PLANNING: ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

Preparing an Advance Directive is essential in ensuring your wishes regarding your health care are considered if you cannot speak on your behalf. An advance directive tells your health care providers who can make health care decisions for you ("Health Care Agent") and your treatment preferences ("a living will").



Each state has different laws that govern advance directives. To ensure they are appropriately met, you must discuss your desires with family members and your health care provider. The Office of the Attorney General in Maryland has created a guide to state law on future health care decision-making. It has a template Advance Directive form available for your use. This excellent starting point contains FAQs related to advance healthcare planning. Link [here](#).

The main types of advance directives include a living will and a power of attorney. A living will is a written document specifying what medical treatment you would or would not want if you cannot do so yourself. A power of attorney allows you to designate a person or agent to make decisions on your behalf if you cannot do so yourself. For more information on both living wills and powers of attorney, The main types of advance directives include a living will and a power of attorney defined by the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and can be accessed [here](#).



PUBLIC HEALTH ALERTS

NEW COVID-19 RESOURCES

- The federal Public Health Emergency (PHE), renewed on May 16, 2022, remains in effect for 90 days through July 15, 2022.
- The Department of Health and Human Services has indicated that it will give no less than 60 days of advanced notice before the termination of the PHE.
- Health care officials speculate that the PHE will likely extend through the midterm elections.
- This means that the regulatory flexibilities related to the PHE will continue for patients, providers, and payors.
- On June 27, 2022, the Maryland Department of Health updated several public health orders that will be in effect for six months until January 18, 2023. Links to their orders can be found here:
 - (1) Amended Vaccination Matters [Order](#)
 - (2) Amended Various Health Care Matters [Order](#)
 - (3) Amended Nursing Home Matters [Order](#)



CONTACT US

Email us at: info@mdemergencyprepnetwork.org
 Website: www.mdemergencyprepnetwork.org

CONTRIBUTORS

Caitlin Houck, Executive Director, Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association (MNCHA): chouck@mncha.org
 Charmeda McCready, Associate Director, MNCHA Emergency Preparedness: info@mdemergencyprepnetwork.org
 Sarah Nagy, Development Officer, Nonprofit Resources US, LLC: info@nonprofitresourcesus.com

Through a partnership between the Maryland-National Capital Home Association (MNCHA) and the Maryland Department of Health Office of Preparedness and Response (MDH OP&R), the Maryland Emergency Preparedness Network (EPN) was created to disseminate free, important, and timely information before, during and after an emergency. The EPN's goal is to build health resilience among one of Maryland's most vulnerable populations, the homebound.