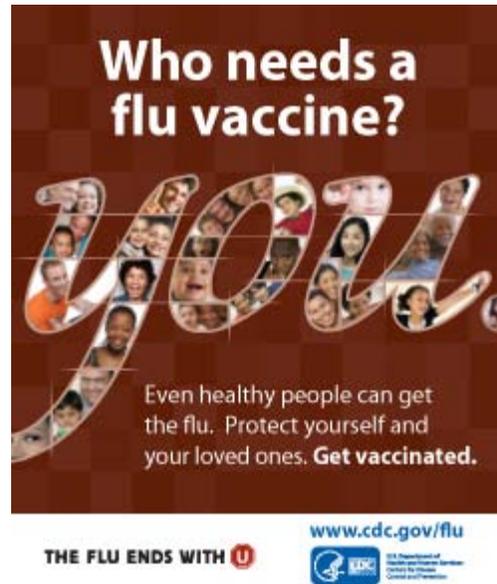


ISDH Long Term Care
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Protecting Vulnerable Older Adults in Emergencies

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has released a guide titled [*Identifying Vulnerable Older Adults and Legal Options for Increasing Their Protection During All-Hazards Emergencies*](#).

We cannot accurately predict which groups of people will be most affected by future emergencies. However, recent events have shown that some characteristics of older adults put them at greater risk of illness and death during many types of emergencies. For example, older adults may have impaired mobility, diminished sensory awareness, multiple chronic health conditions, and social and economic limitations—all of which can impair their ability to prepare for, respond to, and adapt during emergencies. An emergency or disaster also can disrupt vital support systems that older adults rely on. For many older adults, independent living is made possible only with help from friends, family, and in-home services that provide meals, home-based health care, and help with the activities of daily living.

Events such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the earthquake and tsunami in Japan in 2011 showed how vulnerable older adults can be during emergencies. Unfortunately, research conducted for this guide found three major limitations to our ability to plan for and protect older adults:

1. Many different strategies are being used to identify vulnerable older adults across the country, but none of these strategies have been evaluated.
2. No consensus exists on the best way to identify and protect older adults.
3. Gaps exist in legal mandates to protect older adults.

This guide is intended to help close many of the gaps in emergency planning and preparedness for vulnerable older adults. In particular, it aims to give public health officials, the Aging Services Network, emergency management personnel, and essential partners from other sectors and at all jurisdictional levels (community, regional, tribal, and state) the critical information, strategies, and resources they need to improve the planning for and protection of vulnerable, community-dwelling older adults during all types

of emergencies (often referred to as *all-hazards emergencies*).

CMS Partnership to Improve Dementia Care

In 2012, CMS launched the Partnership to Improve Dementia Care in Nursing Homes to promote comprehensive dementia care and therapeutic interventions for nursing home residents with dementia-related behaviors. The goals of this initiative include a focus on person-centered care and the reduction of unnecessary antipsychotic medication use in nursing homes and eventually other care settings as well.

CMS is using several approaches to successfully implement this initiative. CMS is developing and conducting trainings for nursing home providers, surveyors, and consumers. CMS is conducting research, raising public awareness, using regulatory oversight, and public reporting to increase transparency.

In addition, CMS has partnered with national organizations to encourage communication among the national organizations and their members. The American Medical Directors Association (AMDA) and the American Health Care Association (AHCA) have sent letters to their membership or State affiliates this summer. The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (Consumer Voice) sent a press release to their membership indicating their support for the initiative.

AMDA's letter sought to educate members about the issues to achieve the goals of the Partnership and encourages nursing home medical directors to join with AMDA and CMS in reducing the unnecessary use of antipsychotic agents by refocusing the interdisciplinary team on a better understanding of the root cause of dementia-related behaviors. The letter further provides medical directors with the tools and resources they might use to achieve this goal. The letter is located on the AMDA website at http://www.amda.com/advocacy/antipsychotic_msg.pdf.

AHCA provided a template letter, along with the facility-specific data, to their State associations. AHCA's State associations were able to provide nursing facilities with the percentage of long-stay residents in their facilities that are currently being prescribed antipsychotic drugs for an off-label use. In addition to the information contained in the sample letter, some State associations may have also provided information regarding State-specific resources available to assist facilities with reducing the percentage of off-label use.

The Consumer Voice has advocated for the appropriate care for residents with dementia, which is important to residents, their families, and advocates. In meeting with former CMS Administrator Don Berwick, MD, and current Administrator Marilyn Tavenner, Consumer Voice advocated for strong leadership from CMS to end the misuse of antipsychotic drugs in nursing homes. On March 28, 2012, Consumer Voice sent a press release to its members applauding CMS's new national initiative. The press release is located on the Consumer Voice website at <http://www.theconsumervoice.org/sites/default/files/nccnhr/campaign-to-end-antipsychotic-drug-use.pdf>.

The CMS Midwest Division has released [partnership questions and answers](#). If you have questions about CMS' Partnership to Improve Dementia Care in Nursing Home, please contact Kathleen Wilson at (410) 786-1507 or Kathleen.Wilson@cms.hhs.gov.

Alzheimer's Town Hall

On Wednesday, September 26, 2012, at 5:30 p.m., the Alzheimer's Association Greater Indiana Chapter will hold an [Alzheimer's Town Hall](#). Hear from an expert panel that includes a neurologist, a geriatrician, a leader in aging and community services, a leader in the minority healthcare community, and a family living with Alzheimer's disease. Topics will include research, caregiving, access to community services and state/national plans to address Alzheimer's disease.

Come share your comments about what is needed for a successful implementation of both plans and how best to take advantage of this historic opportunity.

Location: WFYI Public Broadcasting • 1630 North Meridian Street • Indianapolis

Register by calling 800-272-3900.

Flu Season 2012 - 2013

With the end of summer approaching, it is time to begin planning for the 2012 - 2013 flu season. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released information and resources about the upcoming flu season. The CDC Web site provides information about vaccines and what individuals should know about the flu. The information is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/upcoming.htm>.

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) also has information about the flu. The information is available at <http://www.in.gov/isdh/25462.htm>.

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) provides free resources to help educate older adults about the seriousness of influenza, the importance of annual influenza immunization, and available vaccine options. A toolkit for professionals is available at <http://www.ncoa.org/improve-health/community-education/flu--you/flu-you-resources-for.html>.