

**BEST PRACTICES**

Adherence to procedures

**Keeping Kidney Patients Safe**[www.kidneypatientsafety.org](http://www.kidneypatientsafety.org)**Emergency Preparedness**

Elkins Dialysis Unit

**Contact Information**

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<b>Category:</b>	Adherence to procedures
<b>Type of Facility:</b>	FMC dialysis unit
<b>Number of Patients:</b>	50; operates 6 days/week

**Background**

Elkins Dialysis Unit has always had an emergency disaster book containing the demographic sheets for patients, which is updated by the clinic secretary monthly. It includes contact numbers for patients, as well as their emergency contact's phone number. However, when a strong storm in 2012 knocked out power in unit and surrounding area, it was revealed that a key piece of information was missing – cell phone numbers that could be used to reach the patient. The information was not consistently collected since there was no place for it on the demographic sheet. The facility quickly learned that that no power meant no phone service for most of the patients, as many did not have landlines.

Since it was a small community, the Elkins Dialysis Unit was able to locate all patients and notify them of the power loss in the facility, but were determined not have the problem re-occur with another storm.

**Policies and activities implemented**

The QAI Committee discussed what was learned from the storm and how they could do better in the future. As a result, they implemented the following procedures to ensure patient contact information is current and easily found:

- Upon admission to the unit, patients are asked for at least one cell phone contact number of someone who would be willing to make physical contact with patient. Patients may provide multiple numbers.
- The unit secretary maintains a master list of phone numbers.
- The cell phone number is recorded on the patient's demographic sheet.

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- Patients receive a natural disaster guide upon admission.
- Natural disaster preparedness information is reviewed with patients on a quarterly basis.

The process of collecting and verifying phone numbers took roughly a week. The unit secretary has primary responsibility for maintaining the information.

### **Outcomes**

The system was tested in September 2013 when Hurricane Sandy hit the area and they experienced another power loss. The facility was able to contact all patients, either directly or through their emergency contacts, demonstrating the value of the procedure.

### **Recommendations**

Ms. Weaner commented that it was a simple process to implement, it just took time. She noted, "I think our greatest attribute is when events happen we think about them, meet as a team and say what could we do differently, how can we improve?"