

From: Network of Care <info@nocnew.org>
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Subject: Cabarrus County, N.C., adopts Network of Care for Public Health

The following article appeared in the Cabarrus County (N.C.) Independent Tribune on Jan. 21, 2016.

Need help during winter weather? Check the Network of Care

By Erin Kidd

With the dropping temperatures and the snow clouds rolling in, heat is a necessity for safety. Those in need of heating assistance now have a new venue to search for services.

The Cabarrus Health Alliance has launched the **Network of Care for Public Health Assessment and Wellness**, an innovative, online web portal that will provide families and individuals with key health information as well as comprehensive list of services and resources in an easy-to-read format. Marcella Beam, public information officer for the alliance, said the website will be extremely beneficial to the community, especially with the threat of winter weather.

“It has the benefit of being able to put information on there about emergency situations, how to prepare, keeping your pipes warm and how people can apply for heat assistance,” Beam said.

The site, www.cabarrusnetworkofcare.org, has a disaster preparedness link which includes advice on how to be ready for earthquakes, natural disasters, floods, hurricanes, winter storms and many other occurrences.

The winter storm section urges people to be prepared by having sufficient heating fuel, emergency heating equipment and what to eat when stuck inside.

“It is the perfect timing right now for us to launch the site because of the hazardous weather but the site can be used anytime people need something that is a personal emergency,” Beam said.

The services link on the site takes the user to information and locations of places that can help them with rehabilitation loans, home purchase counseling, housing expense, senior housing, housing authorities and emergency shelters. Those that click on emergency shelters are given phone numbers and addresses to places like the American Red Cross, Cabarrus County Emergency Management and Charlotte Emergency Housing.

“The goal is to allow people to find services for their own emergency,” Beam said. “If they need food assistance, they can learn where food pantries are. If they need heating assistance, it will take them directly to a link.”

The Network of Care also has a mobile app that shows users the locations of services near them.

The site is a result of a Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant the alliance received.

“Through our continued work to improve the health of residents, we identified a need to improve access and knowledge of community resources. This site is a one-stop shop for residents to find the services and information they need to live a healthier life,” said Dr. William Pilkington, Cabarrus Health Alliance CEO and health director.

The alliance worked with Trilogy Integrated Resources LLC, the leading information provider in the field of social services, to create the site.

Community members and stakeholders have access to local health indicators, model practices from around the nation and local collaboration tools. The site integrates statistics from National Data Warehouse and other sources into a collection of more than 100 local health and quality-of-life indicators specific to Cabarrus County. Further content is also available, including news, reports and services, all specifically related to the topic of concern. The system also automatically brings a vetted library of “best practices” from around the nation. This “best practices” library describes how different communities with the same problem have worked toward positive change.

Beam said the alliance also sought community input when creating this new tool. She said they wanted to make it as user-friendly as possible.

“We brought in some community members and community partners and had them look at it. We are partnering with Cabarrus County government and Department of Human Services, which are two huge initiatives in the community that regularly work with population that are in need of services,” Beam said.

Greg Stewart, who works with the alliance and previously with the mental health department of social services, said he believes this website is something the community has needed for a long time.

“It’s great to be able to have a one-stop place to find things. This is a really big deal because it is hard to get all that information in one place,” Stewart said. “As a professional and as a community activist, it’s great to see this finally coming to fruition. I can see a number of professionals and regular community folks being able to go on and get information.”

The health alliance is planning an official launch of its Network of Care on Thursday, Feb. 4 but the site is already up and running for anyone who needs assistance during the winter storm.

“I’ve lived in the community for a long time and there are a lot of needs. It’s hard for everyone to

have access to all information that is going on and it makes a struggle that much more frustrating when you are having a hard time,” Stewart said. “I think this site is really going to help the community.”

What to do before a winter storm threatens:

- Prepare to survive on your own for at least three days. Assemble a disaster supply kit. Be sure to include winter specific items such as rock salt to melt ice on walkways, sand to improve traction, snow shovels and other snow removal equipment. Keep a stock of food and extra drinking water.
 - Prepare for possible isolation in your home:
 - Have sufficient heating fuel; regular fuel sources may be cut off.
 - Have emergency heating equipment and fuel (a gas fireplace or a wood burning stove or fireplace) so you can keep at least one room of your residence livable. (Be sure the room is well ventilated.) If a thermostat controls your furnace and your electricity is cut off by a storm, you will need emergency heat.
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If you have any questions or would like a more in-depth demonstration of how the Network of Care works, please contact Bruce Bronzan at BBronzan@trilogyir.com or (415) 458-5900.

Thank you,

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