



**DALLAS COUNTY  
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OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION**

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**DCHHS Steps Up Preparation to Receive Possible Hurricane Evacuees**

August 29, 2008 (Dallas) — Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) continues its planning and preparation for the possible arrival of evacuees from hurricane impacted areas. DCHHS has conducted evaluation of potential shelter sites and is in the process of moving supplies from its stockpile to these sites. DCHHS is also coordinating with the State of Texas the potential evacuation of hospital patients, nursing home residents and other special needs individuals from areas in the path of the hurricane.

“The logistics of evacuating an area is complex and requires the cooperation of agencies at every level,” said Zachary Thompson, DCHHS Director. “Once the shelters are open and operational there is still much work to do. Medical assessments must be performed, sanitation conditions of temporary shelters must be performed, and health issues of possible evacuees must be addresses. This is when DCHHS staff, the MRC, and our medical partners step up to ensure the health, safety and well being of the shelter residences are met,” Thompson continued.

Dallas County Health and Human Services is working with the State of Texas and our municipal and community partners to coordinate our response efforts during a possible evacuation,” stated Zachary Thompson, DCHHS Director. DCHHS Public Health Preparedness staff, along with representatives of local, regional and state emergency management, public health, hospital preparedness and education agencies from across the state of Texas are conducting daily conference calls to discuss how and when hurricane preparedness plans would be implemented. The Dallas County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and the Dallas County Medical Operations Center (DMOC) have been placed on stand-by to respond should the need arise. The DMOC is comprised of representatives of local hospitals and Metropolitan Medical Response System member cities. It is an outgrowth of the successful joint response of medical professionals during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. DCHHS Environmental Health and Epidemiology Assessment Team are conducting site visits of potential shelter facilities within Dallas County as a part of its shelter surveillance program. During the response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, DCHHS and its medical partners instituted an on-going shelter surveillance program to monitor sanitary conditions in the shelters and to immediately detect any communicable disease among evacuees to avert a possible disease outbreak through early intervention.