

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
BOARD AGENDA LETTER**



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 4/15/03
Department Name: Public Health Department
Department No.: 041
Agenda Date: 5/20/03
Placement: Administrative
Estimate Time: N/A
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM:

Naomi Schwartz, First District Supervisor
Roger E. Heroux, Director, Public Health Department
John M. Scherrei, Fire Chief, Santa Barbara County Fire
Charlene Chase, Director, Department of Social Services
James L. Broderick, Director, Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health

STAFF

CONTACT: Nancy Lapolla, Director, Emergency Medical Services Agency
681-5274

SUBJECT: Emergency and Disaster Memorandum of Understanding with American Red Cross Final Update on the Vulnerable Population Disaster Grant

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

- A. Approve a Memorandum of Understanding between the County of Santa Barbara and the American Red Cross-Santa Barbara County Chapter for the care and shelter of county residents during an emergency or disaster.
- B. Accept the attached abstract as the final update on the Public Health Department's Vulnerable Populations Emergency and Disaster Grant Project.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendations are primarily aligned with:
Goal No. II. A Safe and Healthy Community in Which to Live, Work, and Visit.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

The purpose of the proposed memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the County of Santa Barbara and the American Red Cross (ARC) is to provide a framework upon which County emergency response officials can rely in responding to the care and shelter needs of county residents following an emergency or disaster.

First District Supervisor Naomi Schwartz brought to the County's attention the need to enhance our Emergency Disaster Plan for Vulnerable Populations. She had a key role in initiating the development of a disaster plan to focus on the special needs of this population and has been a strong advocate to ensure systems are in place and coordinated between all emergency disaster response agencies. Vulnerable populations are defined as those that are medically fragile or who are unable to respond without assistance in the event of an emergency or disaster.

The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency and Office of Emergency Services (OES) collaborated on the development of a disaster response plan to meet the needs of vulnerable populations following a large-scale emergency or disaster. The Vulnerable Populations Emergency and Disaster Grant Project originally planned to create an agreement between the American Red Cross and the County to address the needs of vulnerable populations in the event of an emergency or disaster.

It was soon realized, however, that any attempt to address the evacuation and sheltering needs of the vulnerable populations should be a part of a more extensive disaster response arrangement. Each participant agency is responsible for the safety and welfare not only of vulnerable populations, but also of all county residents. Since a general, comprehensive agreement did not exist, it was necessary to create one.

The attached MOU is the result of three years of discussion between the ARC and county departments involved in emergency and disaster response—the Office of Emergency Services (OES), the Public Health Department Emergency Medical Services Agency, the Department of Social Services and the Department of Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services—to come to an understanding of what role each key agency would play in the event of an emergency or disaster.

The major goals of the MOU are:

1. To document the mutual understanding of the above agencies of their individual functions and responsibilities in responding to the general care and shelter needs of all county residents following an emergency or disaster.
2. To document the mutual understanding of the above agencies of their individual functions and responsibilities in responding to the special care and shelter needs of the county's medically fragile and other vulnerable populations following an emergency or disaster.

If approved the effective date of this MOU would be May 1, 2003. The MOU is automatically renewed yearly unless either party terminates it in writing according to the general provisions. The MOU states that the Office of Emergency Services will coordinate a meeting every two years with all agencies and departments identified in the agreement to review, revise, and develop new plans as appropriate.

This MOU was a major objective and a key accomplishment of the Vulnerable Populations Emergency and Disaster Grant Project and addresses emergency and disaster operations and policy guidance, the development of departmental facility emergency plans, the training of departmental staff and emergency coordinators, planning for extended medical care needs, and the provision of mental health services following an emergency or disaster.

The Emergency and Disaster Plan for Vulnerable Populations Implementation Grant Project abstract report attached was submitted as part of the final report to the State EMS Authority and provides an brief overview of the accomplishments of final third year of the grant. The impact of this project has been positive for the emergency and response system in Santa Barbara County. Below are a few of the projects highlights:

- Agencies have a clearer view of their individual, mutual aid, systemic responsibilities in an emergency or disaster. Dialogue has been opened between departments that will facilitate future revisions and improvements to countywide response systems.
- We now have a general agreement that defines roles, responsibilities, and resources for disaster response.
- Dialogue and outreach to community agencies and vulnerable individuals has been made. The groundwork has been laid for any future disaster preparedness education and follow-up on the activities of the last three years.
- County staff, administration, and residents are more aware of the importance of being prepared for emergency situations (e.g., having a disaster plan, contents of plan, mutual agreements, etc.)

Since the grant ended on December 31, 2002, the EMS Agency has sought to maintain the momentum created by the activities of the project and Task Force of the last three years. The County infrastructure to meet the needs of vulnerable populations has been put in place and the EMS Agency is working to transition the project to a community based organization as the best place to continue community outreach and education. Direct Relief International has expressed interest and is in the process of procuring additional funding for the continuation of the community education and outreach activities.

Each individual and agency that has participated in this project and participated in the creation of the proposed MOU should be proud of the accomplishment that its implementation represents. County government, community based organizations, and individuals now have a clearer view of their individual, mutual, and systemic responsibilities in an emergency or disaster.

Mandates and Service Levels:

California Health and Safety Code, sections 101025, 101030, 101040, and 101080, and California Code of Regulations, Title 19, Division 2, Office of Emergency Services with regard to county responsibility for the sheltering, health and safety of county residents and adherence to codes and regulations following an emergency or disaster.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Accepting this memorandum of understanding and final project update will not result in an increased General Fund contribution.

Special Instructions:

Signed copies of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Board of Supervisors and each signature agency. Please notify Eliana Guerra at x5274 when the signed copies are available.

Concurrence: None