

# BRUNSWICK COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM, THE FIRST OF ITS KIND

In an effort to establish a plan that is the first of its type for the State of North Carolina, Emergency Medical Service employees of Brunswick County will be performing home visits to pre-identified Special Needs Patients in order to ascertain their needs in the event of an emergency evacuation. To the best of our knowledge, no other emergency services entity has established a program of this magnitude. This will create enhanced awareness for emergency service workers during the evacuation and sheltering process where in or out of county sheltering options may be considered. Brunswick County Emergency Service's goal is to have all who may need extra time during an evacuation, either due to mental or physical ailment or lack of transportation, registered on the County's Special Needs Registry.

The Registry, already with over 200 patients signed up on it, is the point of contact with which emergency medical personnel will use to call each patient and schedule a home visit. Upon visiting the home, medical workers will verify the patient's medical information, perform a cursory home safety inspection, and determine if the patient's emergency evacuation plan will consist of help from the county or the patient's own family member or caregiver. Randy Thompson, Emergency Services Director says, "Should an event occur, the county will be prepared to call ahead to each patient and transport them if necessary, to the county or a safe neighboring county's designated Special Needs or Medically Managed Shelter."

This outreach effort by Brunswick County Emergency Services is being shared regionally and nationally with preparedness and response communities in hopes that others will use this as a model to enhance their own response as well.

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