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GMPHN Urges Monadnock Residents to Prepare for Hurricane Irene

KEENE, NH, 08/25/11 — The Greater Monadnock Public Health Network is urging Monadnock residents to prepare for Hurricane Irene. All households should have a home emergency kit, a grab-and-go bag in the event you need to leave your house quickly, a family communications plan, and a family evacuation plan. It only takes a few minutes to create these plans and put together an emergency kit, but these simple actions can help save lives during a disaster. During a disaster, it can be several days before help from the state or federal government arrives, so it is very important that people are prepared to take care of themselves for the first few days.

Your home emergency kit should include one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, a three-day supply of food (canned, dried or non-perishable), a non-electric can opener, battery-powered / hand-crank / solar radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert capabilities, ABC-type fire extinguisher, flashlight (preferably hand-crank or solar), battery-powered lantern, first aid kit, whistle to signal for help, moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation, wrench or pliers to turn off utilities, etc.

Your grab-and-go bag should include items such as one day's clothing and shoes for each family member, personal care products (toothbrush, feminine hygiene products, diapers, etc.), towels, blankets or sleeping bags, flashlights and extra batteries, granola bars/trail mix, an extra set of car keys, cash, a prepaid phone card, and copies of important documents (medical and prescription information, passports, birth certificates, driver's license, insurance papers, bank account information, etc.). If you have to leave your home quickly, don't forget your prescription medications, eyeglasses and/or hearing aids.

Your family communications plan should include 1) an emergency contact in your local area; 2) a contact out-of-state in case the emergency affects your local contact; and 3) a neighborhood meeting place. You should write this information on a 3 x 5 card and give copies to all family members to keep with them.

Make sure all members of your household are familiar with your family evacuation plan. Everyone should know: 1) the best exits out of your home; 2) a predetermined meeting place (either in your neighborhood or close by but out of harm's way); 3) local radio station frequency

to listen for updates; 4) a plan for pets in case you need to evacuate, and 5) the location of your grab-and-go bag, family communications plan, first aid kit, etc.

For more information about how to be prepared before a disaster and additional items to include in your emergency kit, please visit www.ready.gov. To learn what to do before, during and after a hurricane, visit <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/hurricane/index.shtm>. The National Weather Service website at www.weather.gov will provide up-to-date information about Hurricane Irene. Visit <http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/pets.html> for more information on how to prepare for your pets during an emergency and to download a Community Pet Preparedness Toolkit.

For regional updates, visit the GMPHN's social media sites:
<http://greatermonadnockpublichealthnetwork.blogspot.com>
<http://twitter.com/ReadyMonadnock>
www.facebook.com/GreaterMonadnockPublicHealthNetwork

The Greater Monadnock Public Health Network is one of 15 public health networks in New Hampshire. It is housed by Cheshire Medical Center / Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene and is financed through Cheshire County via a grant by the New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services, Division of Public Health Services, with funds provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

After the September 11th attacks, state and local officials realized the need for a more robust public health system in New Hampshire. The public health networks strive to enhance and improve public health-related services by increasing collaboration and planning across municipal boundaries and the health and safety sectors. The Greater Monadnock Public Health Network consists of representatives from each of the 33 municipalities in the Monadnock region as well as representatives from regional organizations which provide for the public's health and safety.

For more information contact Amanda Gaspard at agaspard@cheshire-med.com or 603-354-5454 Ext. 3030.

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