

DECEMBER 3, 2024

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

FINAL REPORT

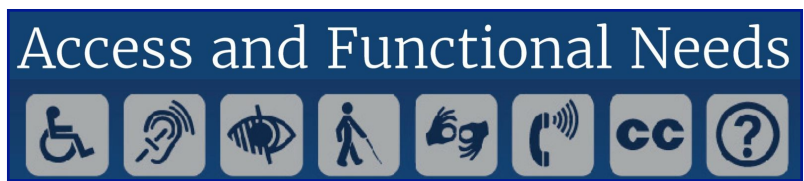
Prepared by Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee of the
YOLO COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING & ADULT SERVICES



9 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS RECOMMENDATIONS FINAL REPORT

BACKGROUND

The County Fire in 2018 and other emergencies led the Yolo County Commission on Aging & Adult Services (YCCAAS) to discuss significant concerns about how older adults and people with disabilities would fare in future disasters. The Commission felt strongly that it was imperative to include people with all types of access and functional needs (AFN) in the County’s emergency planning, and to highlight the requirements of these community members in emergency preparedness discussions. YCCAAS formed the Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee (EPS) to address the issue. EPS then carefully researched and thoroughly discussed emergency preparedness gaps and opportunities, consulting with the Yolo County Office of Emergency Services (OES) on an ongoing basis.



The Subcommittee’s first report, which was adopted by the YCCAAS in December 2019, included 9 key recommended actions presented to the Yolo County Board of Supervisors. The initial report also included a section of recommendations for the YCCAAS itself, and a suggested plan of action for city aging commissions of Davis, West Sacramento, Winters and Woodland.

EPS presented the report, including the 9 original emergency preparedness recommendations, to the Board of Supervisors at the Board’s regularly scheduled meeting on January 28, 2020.

The next several months were eventful globally, and in Yolo County, with the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and the LNU Lightning Complex Fires, which brought more issues to light. The EPS identified 5 more issues needing attention, and returned to the

Board of Supervisors on September 1, 2020, with an update on the initial slate of 9 recommendations, and 5 additional recommendations.

What follows is a final report on what progress has been made on implementing the 9 original recommendations and the 5 additional recommendations. It also includes an overview of relevant new emergency preparedness projects and programs.



First responders assist a wheelchair bound senior down a set of stairs to exit the building.

EMERGENCIES DO HAPPEN.



Know your neighbors. Plan together. Be ready.

RECOMMENDATIONS DISCUSSION UPDATES

This section contains the text of the original nine recommendations presented to the Board in January 2020, the four additional recommendations from September 2020, as well as discussion about the issues presented and the status of each recommendation.

JANUARY 2020 RECOMMENDATIONS



1 VOLUNTARY DISASTER REGISTRY: Identify those individuals living in the unincorporated areas of the county with access and functional needs (AFN) who will need assistance in an emergency.

Original Recommendation (Jan. 2020): It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors direct staff to implement a county voluntary Special Needs Alert Program (SNAP), to identify those individuals living in the unincorporated areas of the county with access and functional needs who will need assistance in an emergency. This program should include education and outreach to ensure citizens are aware of the program's existence.

Revised recommendation (September 2020): It is recommended that the Yolo County Board of Supervisors direct staff to: a) develop a protocol to identify individuals in the unincorporated areas of the county with AFNs who do not use county services (and are willing to be identified); b) specify a mechanism by which they can provide their contact

information to OES; c) designate locations to house updated contact information such as rural fire departments; and d) establish a public outreach program to make citizens aware of the protocol, mechanism, and location where the information is housed.

DISCUSSION: EPS and OES developed a unique solution to this problem as follows.

From the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) website:

“The official guidance from Cal OES regarding voluntary disaster registries is that jurisdictions should not use them.

The idea of a voluntary disaster registry is simple – create a list of individuals who need additional support during emergencies which the government can use to help when a crisis strikes. However, the successful development, protection, adoption, and implementation of disaster registries is incredibly complex. However, registries often give individuals a false sense of confidence that because they are on a list, they will receive additional resources or priority response services during emergencies. This false assumption is dangerous and can lead to an overall decrease in personal disaster preparedness. In addition, as opt-in programs, registries provide emergency managers with an incomplete picture of the access and functional needs-related dynamic in their community. Registries are difficult to keep current and it can be challenging to protect the personal identifying information these lists contain.

A successful alternative to voluntary disaster registries is for local jurisdictions to leverage existing disability and accessible or functional needs-related support systems, such as community-based organizations, Independent Living Centers, and local Access and Functional Needs Advisory Committees.”

Because of the state’s negative view of voluntary disaster registries, EPS worked with Yolo OES to identify a system within Alert Yolo (the County’s new mass notification system) that allows residents to supply information about any AFNs they may have. For instance, when signing up for Alert Yolo, a person who walks with a cane can check the appropriate box to indicate the use of a walking aid, so that OES knows they cannot walk long distances. Alert Yolo will capture such AFN information so that it can be used by emergency response resources. Reminders will be sent annually to help people remember to update their information if needed. A person with privacy concerns can opt

to sign up for alerts by texting a phone message using the appropriate code, without revealing any personal information.

As a footnote, the EPS learned that Special Needs Alert Programs (SNAP) refer to something related, but different, i.e. identifies people who wander. So EPS moved from advocating for a SNAP list to discussing a voluntary disaster registry via Alert Yolo. Yolo County’s voluntary registry is called the Community Registry Messaging Program for Special Needs.

STATUS: Completed, with work ongoing.



TBD

2 RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES FOR THE ELDERLY (RCFE): Foster greater collaboration and cooperation between assisted living facilities and county emergency services.

Original Recommendation (January 2020): It is recommended that the Yolo County Board of Supervisors require an annual report indicating which licensed continuing care facilities are participating or not participating in Healthcare Preparedness Coalition regular meetings and tabletop exercises. To incentivize attendance, the Board of Supervisors should direct county staff to: investigate the possibility of instituting a business license requirement to attend meetings/tabletop exercises; and/or establish a gold star program to reward those who attend; and/or explore other alternatives. The Yolo County Board of Supervisors should also direct staff to develop a plan to assist the state in implementation of AB 3098 in Yolo County, emergency plans in all Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFE).

Revised recommendation (September 2020): It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors direct staff to develop specialized assisted living protocols, responses and training, that will foster greater cooperation and collaboration between assisted living facilities and county emergency services, as well as strict adherence to public health regulations/policies/ protocols.

DISCUSSION: This recommendation still needs to be addressed. What was proposed was to develop specialized emergency preparedness training for assisted living facilities unique to their specific needs. This would ensure a more collaborative approach between the county and assisted living facilities, with input from the facilities themselves, so that the training is directly related to their particular requirements.

STATUS: Not yet addressed.

✓

3 PLANNED AND UNPLANNED POWER OUTAGES: Direct county staff to ensure all educational efforts from the county include instruction to residents with special needs on what to do in a power outage.

Original Recommendation (January 2020): It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors direct county staff to ensure all educational efforts from the county include instruction to residents with special needs on what to do in a power outage, including: information about personal power generators; the locations of emergency shelters with electricity; ready.gov and CalOES.ca.gov information placed on city and county websites; and instruction on how to make an individual personal plan. The county should also assure this information is available through Yolo 211 and OES. In the event of a planned or unplanned power outage: emergency alert notifications must explicitly include where people with medical needs can go to obtain power locally; and such facilities must be accessible to persons with AFN.

Recommendation (September 2020): Same as January 2020 recommendation.

DISCUSSION: The YCCAAS, in partnership with the OES and Yolo Healthy Aging Alliance, produced six training modules aimed at older adults on preparing for disasters. The modules include a training video and printable handouts that can be used. The training modules are on the Yolo OES website under Training and Preparedness for Older Adults.

Training and Preparedness for Older Adults (<https://www.yolocounty.gov/government/general-government-departments/office-of-emergency-services/>)

[emergency-preparedness-resources/preparedness-for-older-americans-modules-1-6](https://www.yolocounty.gov/emergency-preparedness-resources/preparedness-for-older-americans-modules-1-6))

A guide that describes actions and considerations that individuals with disabilities can use to increase preparedness before, during, and after disasters was created and is available on the Yolo OES website under Preparedness for Individuals with Disabilities.

Preparedness for Individuals with Disabilities (<https://www.yolocounty.gov/government/general-government-departments/office-of-emergency-services/preparedness-for-individuals-with-disabilities>);

Information on what individuals with disabilities should do in a power outage can be found on the County website under Power Outage.

Power Outage (<https://www.yolocounty.gov/government/general-government-departments/office-of-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-resources/power-outage>).

STATUS: Complete, with opportunity for improvement.

The screenshot shows the Yolo County website's navigation menu with 'GOVERNMENT' selected. The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: 'Government » General Government Departments » Office of Emergency Services ». The title is 'TRAINING & PREPAREDNESS FOR OLDER ADULTS'. The text describes a partnership between the Yolo County Commission on Aging and Adult Services, the Yolo Office of Emergency Services, and the Yolo Healthy Aging Alliance to produce six training modules. It includes a call to action: 'Click the icons/links below to begin the trainings.' Below this are two circular icons for 'TRAINING MODULE 1' and 'TRAINING MODULE 2', both featuring the County of Yolo logo with 'EDUCATION' and 'INDUSTRY' text.



4 ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE/DEMENTIA TRAINING: Develop Alzheimer's Disease/dementia training for first responders.

Original Recommendation (January 2020): It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors direct county staff to develop and make mandatory Alzheimer's Disease/dementia training for law enforcement/fire/EMS departments in the unincorporated areas of the county, and encourage the incorporated cities to do the same.

Recommendation (September 2020): Same as January 2020 recommendation.

DISCUSSION: From the Yolo County Search and Rescue Team website: *"Recently the Yolo County Search and Rescue Team added a dementia safety course as a required part of their training for first responders. Armando Jaramillo (AJ) is the president of the Yolo County search and rescue team. Because of how often searches involve someone living with dementia, AJ recommends that this training be mandatory for all first and secondary responders."*

From the City of Woodland's website: *"The City of Woodland Special Needs Alert Program (SNAP) assists First Responders (Police and Fire) to be more responsive during emergencies to residents of the City of Woodland with special needs. Maintained by the City of Woodland Police and Fire Departments, the registry can help first responders identify those who cannot identify themselves due to a disability or special need, such as Alzheimer's or dementia, autism, or a speech disorder."*

AB 2541, signed by the Governor, mandates the development of guidelines for law enforcement and first responders in regard to addressing wandering associated with Alzheimers disease and dementia:

*"SECTION 1. Section 13515.40 is added to the Penal Code, to read: 13515.40.
(a) The commission, in consultation with subject matter experts, including, but not limited to, law enforcement agencies, the Department of Justice Missing and Unidentified Persons Section, the California Health and Human Services Agency or its designee or designees, organizations with expertise in autism and wandering, organizations with expertise in Alzheimers disease and dementia and wandering, emergency management services agencies, and public transit agencies, shall, on or*

before January 1, 2026, develop guidelines addressing wandering associated with Alzheimers disease, autism, and dementia.

(b)The guidelines shall address, at a minimum, all of the following:

- (1)Development of law enforcement investigational checklists.
- (2)Protocols for deploying law enforcement agency resources, including, but not limited to, search and rescue dogs.
- (3)Protocols for developing community awareness campaigns for wandering prevention and water safety.
- (4)Technological solutions regarding all of the following:
 - (A)Wandering prevention devices.
 - (B)Proactive registries.
 - (C)Community alert systems.
- (5)Coordination and communication protocols between law enforcement agencies and all of the following:
 - (A)Other local law enforcement agencies.
 - (B)First responders, including, but not limited to, emergency management services.
 - (C)911 dispatch.
 - (D)Hospitals.
 - (E)Transportation systems.”

STATUS: Complete.



✓ **5 COUNTY WEBSITE:** Improve the accessibility and navigability of the County website, including making information about emergencies and emergency preparedness easier to find and access.

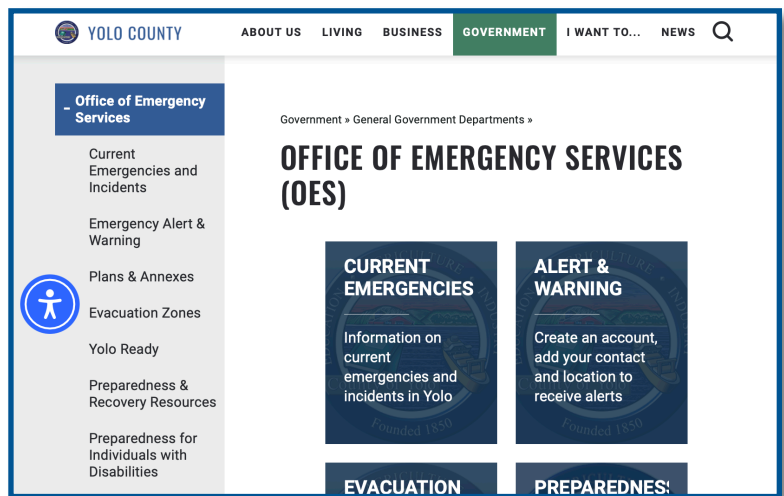
Original Recommendation (January 2020): It is recommended the Board of Supervisors direct staff to improve the accessibility and navigability of the county website so that it gives information about emergency preparedness, and ensures it also displays current emergency situation updates, including information on where persons with special medical needs for power can go during a power outage.

Revised recommendation (September 2020): It is recommended the Board of Supervisors direct staff, as part of the upcoming County website redesign, to improve the accessibility and navigability of the county website so that it gives information about

emergency preparedness, and ensures it also displays current emergency situation updates, including information on where persons with special medical needs for power can go during a power outage.

DISCUSSION: The County OES website, that is vastly improved and now easily navigable with large easy to read buttons, has a plethora of emergency preparedness information, including:

- current emergencies and incidents - a near real-time feed of information
- emergency alerts/warnings that include directions on how to sign up for Alert Yolo, WEA (Wireless Emergency Alerts), EAS (Emergency Alert System)
- plans and annexes
- evacuation zones (explains evacuation terms as well as evacuation preparedness)
- Yolo Ready, a new neighborhood readiness program
- preparedness and recovery resources (drought, flood, extreme heat, winter weather, earthquake, wildfire, and general post emergency resources)
- preparedness for individuals with disabilities (Get Alerts, Make a Plan, Go Bag, Stay Bag, Help Neighbors),
- training and preparedness for older adults, including six training modules and handouts for consumers
- training opportunities, volunteer opportunities, including CERTs, animal needs, teams directed by law enforcement, city teams, specialized groups
- poor air quality
- planned and unplanned power outages, including public safety power shutoffs
- dry well reporting



STATUS: Complete, ongoing with opportunities for improvement.



6 COMMUNITY RESPONSE EMERGENCY TEAMS: Create a rural Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

Original Recommendation (January 2020): It is recommended the Board of Supervisors direct staff to work with local jurisdictions to coordinate and expand volunteers numbers, in particular expanding Community Response Emergency Teams (CERTs).

Revised recommendation (September 2020): It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors direct staff to leverage partnerships to create a rural Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) assigned to a rural fire protection district best situated to recruit volunteers and provide training in basic disaster and medical response skills.

DISCUSSION: Capay Valley Fire Protection District does not have a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) team. They do have a support organization, the Capay Valley Emergency Response Auxiliary (CVERA), which is interested in forming a CERT, and has reached out to neighboring agencies regarding available training. From the CVERA website:

“The Capay Valley Emergency Response Auxiliary is a group of volunteers dedicated to supporting first responders of the Capay Valley Fire District.

The Capay Valley Emergency Response Auxiliary (CVERA) was first formed in 2020 after the Lightning Complex fire tore through the Capay Valley. Local volunteers kept it off the valley floor for a stretch of several days, and it was decided that such calls to action would be needed again in the future. Due to the high number of fires that have happened in California during the same time period, smaller regions like Capay Valley are not always able to receive immediate help from larger fire departments. For this reason, there is now an officially trained group in the valley to support first responders and protect residents.

CVERA is a member of the Yolo County Fire Safe Council, which works to prevent wildfires, serves as a first responder when a fire breaks out, and assists with fire-related recovery efforts. There are also plans to form a Community Emergency Response Team when training and resources are available.”

STATUS: Substantial progress in the Capay Valley area.





7 GO KITS FOR IHSS CONSUMERS: Ensure In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) consumers are prioritized for free go kits.

Original Recommendation (January 2020): If appropriate funds are identified, it is recommended that the Board of Supervisors ensure In Home Supportive Services consumers are prioritized as recipients for free “go kits.”

Recommendation (September 2020): Same as January 2020 recommendation.

DISCUSSION: The In-Home Supportive Services Advisory Committee applied for and received a \$1,000 donation from Partnership Healthplan, with Yolo Healthy Aging Alliance as the fiscal agent managing the donation to purchase go-kits. Resources for Independent Living of Sacramento & Yolo donated 511 PG&E-funded go-kits for County use. IHSS and Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency used \$121,500 to purchase the remaining 2,500 go-kits. Distribution of go-kits started in the western, wildfire-prone part of the County. It will be important that the County identify additional funding for go-kits for new IHSS consumers.

STATUS: Complete and ongoing.



8 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR OES: Support appropriate legislation to increase county OES budgets.

Original Recommendation (January 2020): Due to current budget constraints, it is recommended that the Board of Supervisors, in consultation with Yolo County OES, provide the support for appropriate legislation to increase county OES budgets.

Recommendation (September 2020): Same as January 2020 recommendation.

DISCUSSION: Potential legislation to increase the county OES budget is being closely followed. The Board of Supervisors made this a County legislative priority.

STATUS: Completed, with ongoing attention to relevant legislation.



9 **MULTI-AGENCY COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION: Coordinate and share information about emergency preparedness between the county and cities.**

Original Recommendation (January 2020): It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors use county manager/CAO and county/city 2x2 meetings to coordinate and share information about emergency preparedness.

Revised recommendation (September 2020): It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors use county manager/CAO and county/city 2x2 meetings to coordinate and share information about emergency preparedness; and direct staff to develop a system to ensure someone from OES is in attendance when the topic of emergency preparedness is on the agenda of any of these meetings.

DISCUSSION: The County re-instituted the Disaster Services Council with representatives of the County, cities, Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, fire agencies, Red Cross, YCCAAS, and AFN representatives. The first of its eight objectives is to facilitate effective coordination, collaboration, and communication within the county.

And an OES representative is attending any county meeting if emergency preparedness is on the agenda, especially if specifically invited, and if OES time permits.

STATUS: Complete and ongoing.



SEPTEMBER 2020 ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

✓

EMERGENCY ALERTS AND WARNINGS: The County should make more frequent and effective use of available alert and warning tools. Information and particulars that are more useful should be included in the county alerts; and there should be more frequent alerts.

DISCUSSION: During and after the LNU Lightning Complex Fires of 2020, the County Fire in 2018, and other emergencies, it became clear there was: a scarcity of alerts; confusing language in the alerts; alerts not sent in a timely fashion; and uncertainty as to which evacuation zones a person was in. The suboptimal alerting practices increased the already disproportionately high risk to older adults, people with disabilities, and other individuals with access and functional needs.

The EPS highlighted issues with alerts during the LNU Fires to the Board of Supervisors on September 1, 2020. The Board requested Yolo OES address the situation.

There has been substantial progress in the last two years, including a revamped opt-in mass notification system (Alert Yolo) and web resources that have many of the features EPS requested.

Historically, Yolo Alert was a three county alert system. In consequence, any changes Yolo County wanted to make required permission from the other two counties. Recently, the entire alert system for Yolo County has been revamped under the new name Alert Yolo. It is now an alert system for Yolo County alone. Alerts can now be



Carefully tailored to the specific needs of county residents, without having to obtain permission from two other counties as before.

One major change in the county alert system is its ability to accept information about the access and functional needs of applicants who sign up for alerts. During an emergency, they can be sent specialized messages taking into account their particular disability. If they have privacy concerns, they can opt to sign up for alerts by just texting a code, giving no personal information.

The EPS had earlier requested a way for residents to see a feed of active and past alerts, so they could know what areas needed to evacuate or take other protective action. The County OES website has this feature under Alert Yolo in the Notifications tab.

In response to a request, Yolo OES added the Stay Informed, Get Alerts webpage about emergency alerts and warnings, to help residents better understand the topic.

STATUS: Completed, with work ongoing.

✓

DISASTER SERVICES COUNCIL: Coordinate and share information about emergency preparedness between the county and cities.

DISCUSSION: The county re-instituted the Disaster Services Council with representatives of the county, cities, tribal lands, fire agencies, Red Cross, and YCCAAS. The first of its eight objectives is to facilitate effective coordination, collaboration, and communication within the county.

STATUS: The first meeting of the Disaster Services Council is expected sometime in early 2025.

1/2✓

PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION AND DEPARTMENT: The County should build and maintain a more robust infectious disease team or Dept. of Public Health. There should be an identifiable county contact for any questions or concerns of citizens.

Recommendation (September 2020): It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors direct staff to build and maintain a more robust infectious disease team with an identifiable county contact, that the public can communicate with, that will carry out their mandate to ensure that emergency protocols, i.e. like testing and contact tracing, identification, notification, are followed in long term care facilities (skilled nursing and assisted living facilities) in regard to any resident, staff member, vendor or visitor who has an infectious disease.

DISCUSSION: Yolo County’s public health officials, including the health officer, worked extremely hard during the COVID pandemic. However, Yolo County still doesn’t have a Dept. of Public Health. As a result, there is no listing for Public Health on the County website’s General Government Departments list, making it difficult for residents to find public health-related information on the County’s website. There is a clickable button for COVID-19 information on the County’s home page, but this is just one topic.

Nevertheless, the county now has a Public Information Officer for private citizens to contact if they have inquiries or concerns. From the county website:

“In times of crisis, the Public Information Office assumes an integral role within the Emergency Operations Center staff. During such critical situations, the office’s scope extends to the dissemination of urgent information that can potentially save lives. By effectively communicating vital updates and instructions, the division plays a crucial role in keeping the public well-informed and ensuring their safety.

The Yolo County Public Information Office remains dedicated to fulfilling its mandate of increasing public awareness, fostering community engagement, and building trust with the public. Through their expertise in communication, coordination, and crisis management, they make significant contributions to the overall success of Yolo County’s communication efforts.

*DEPARTMENT CONTACTS: Dwight Coddington, Public Information Officer
625 Court Street, Room 202, Woodland, CA, 95695
Phone: (530) 666-8040 Email: Dwight.Coddington@YoloCounty.org”*

STATUS: Partially complete.



VISITING CARE FACILITIES: Provide a public explanation of why long-term care facilities must follow certain protocols on the restriction of visitation in an emergency.

Recommendation (September 2020): It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors direct staff, during an infectious outbreak, to include in their education efforts, an explanation why visitors to a long term care facility have to follow the required protocols limiting family visitation for the safety and health of long term care residents. The county explanations should suggest alternatives if permitted or are available, e.g. phone calls, virtual visits via tablets or computer, social distancing while sitting on an outdoor patio, visits through an outside window. The county can request that written notification be placed in a prevalent location both inside and outside the affected building where a person would normally enter, as to the specific methods allowed as alternatives to in-person visitation.

DISCUSSION: According to Yolo County Public Health Officer Dr. Aimee Sisson: “Yolo County does not have a written policy on visitation. In California, health officers have the authority to do what is necessary to protect the public health, both in a declared Government Code emergency and under a health-officer-declared local health emergency (Health and Safety Code 101080 and 101040). This authority needs to be used judiciously, and only when absolutely necessary to protect the public health. Autonomy is a basic principle of medical and public health ethics, and is not taken lightly. That being said, there could come a time, perhaps a pandemic, perhaps a nuclear disaster, perhaps something else entirely, when visitation is unsafe, and a health officer might need to restrict visitation in order to protect residents and or visitors from a public health threat. It is impossible to predict what those situations might be, and it remains critical for health officers to maintain their authority. In California, there was a bill proposed in this last legislative cycle, AB 2075, that would have limited health officer authority to restrict visitation in long-term care facilities. The bill was opposed by the Department of Finance and was held in the Appropriations Committee. I understand the importance of visitation for persons living in long-term care facilities, having had relatives in these facilities. Human beings are hardwired for connection, and virtual connection is not the same as in-person connection. Should it become necessary at some point in the future to restrict visitation, every effort will be made to find another solution, but if one cannot be identified, to have restrictions be the minimum necessary for the shortest amount of time necessary.”

The proposal of public education on this issue can also be further explored by the new Disaster Services Council, and possibly be explored in the COVID after action review.

STATUS: Complete.



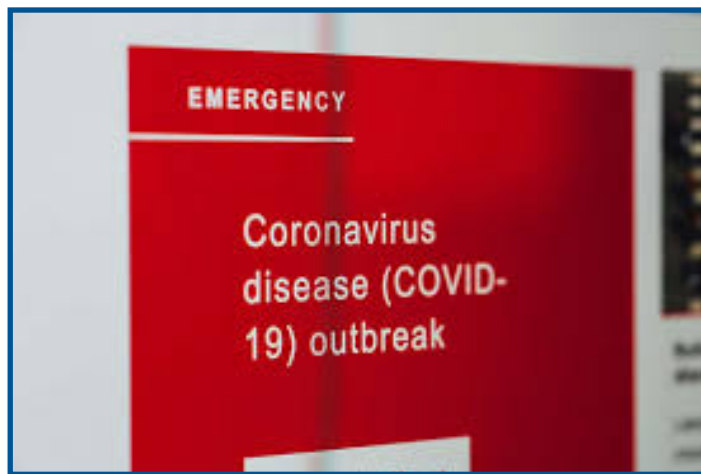


DISEASE OUTBREAK AT CARE FACILITIES: Develop a county policy whether to release the name of facility to the public or press that is a “hotspot” of cases in an infectious disease outbreak.

Recommendation (September 2024): It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors have a policy in place where to release the name of a skilled nursing facility or assisted living facility that is a “hot spot” of cases during an infectious outbreak.

DISCUSSION: According to Yolo County Public Health Officer Dr. Aimee Sisson: “There is not a formal County policy on releasing the location of an outbreak. Every situation is unique, and we have to weigh the benefits of disclosure with the need for patient confidentiality. In general, I favor transparency, especially for a communicable disease that could put members of the public at risk. When a long-term care facility has an outbreak, that facility typically communicates the presence of the outbreak to residents, staff, family members, and visitors. This generally covers nearly all persons at risk of exposure, but may not reach prospective residents and their families, prospective or recent employees, or occasional volunteers. During my tenure as health officer during the COVID emergency, we initially had an informal policy to issue a press release when there were 10 or more cases in a facility. Later during the COVID emergency, Public Health reported COVID cases in long-term care facilities on our public LTCF dashboard, identifying cases by facility, and stopped issuing press releases. At that point, cases were widespread in the community and in long-term care facilities.”

STATUS: Complete.



ADDITIONAL PROJECTS & PROGRAMS



S TATE OF CALIFORNIA ALERT AND WARNING GUIDELINES: Kate Laddish, a member of the Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee, was invited to submit suggestions to improve California state alert guidelines to include consideration of those with AFN, e.g. elderly, disabled, blind, deaf, English as a second language speakers.

DISCUSSION: Kate Laddish, a member of the EPS and Chair of the Yolo County IHSS Advisory Committee, was appointed to California’s Standardized Emergency Management System Alert & Warning Specialist Committee in 2020 as an AFN representative. The SEMS Alert & Warning Specialist Committee is tasked with writing and revising the State’s alert and warning guidelines. In order to satisfy the requirements of AB 580 (Emergency services: vulnerable populations; Rodriguez 2021), the committee revised the guidelines to better address the needs of people with disabilities and other AFNs, including limited English proficiency, lack of transportation, and limited financial resources.

Kate rewrote and expanded the AFN-focused material from a couple paragraphs to five subsections: Access and Functional Needs Considerations (for alerting programs), Accessible and Actionable Alert and Warning Messages, Time Needed to Act (i.e., the importance of sending alerts soon enough that people who need extra time can take protective action), Events Warranting Alert or Warning, and Inclusive Communication Planning and Whole Community Outreach.

The Alert & Warning Specialist Committee approved the revised guidelines in 2022, and the document received final SEMS approval in spring 2024. The updated State of California Alert & Warning Guidelines were [published](#) on the Cal OES [website](#) in May 2024.

The expanded AFN information in the State’s guidelines reflects Yolo County discussions and experiences, and was informed significantly by EPS discussions. In turn, the state Alert & Warnings committee discussions informed EPS work on related topics.

STATUS: Complete.



YOLO OES ACCESS & FUNCTIONAL NEEDS WORKING GROUP: This group was formed to represent those with AFNs in emergency planning.

DISCUSSION: This group was formed to represent those with AFNs in emergency planning. The AFN Working Group brings together emergency planners and managers, other county staff, members of the AFN communities, and representatives from nonprofit organizations. It is the type of organization recommended in “Inclusive Communication Planning and Whole Community Outreach” in the State Alert & Warning Guidelines discussed above. The AFN Working Group was involved in developing [Yolo Ready](#), a neighborhood readiness program. Yolo Ready has material developed by Yolo OES staff and the AFN Working Group. The booklets explain how to create a neighborhood emergency preparedness program to prevent citizen injury or death in the event of a disaster or other crisis. It is much like the Neighborhood Watch program to prevent crime.

A pilot program was completed at Rancho Yolo in Davis to determine the program’s effectiveness and work out any potential problems.

STATUS: Ongoing.

Thank you for your interest in Yolo Ready and helping your community become more prepared!

<p>Prepare Your Household</p> <p>Personal preparedness is a big part of neighborhood preparedness. What you do today to get ready for emergencies and disasters could make all the difference when they strike.</p>	<p>Prepare Your Neighborhood</p> <p>The Yolo Ready Neighborhood Workshop provides the tools to prepare and organize your neighborhood to respond together in that first hour after a disaster to reduce injuries, protect your property and the environment, and most importantly, to save lives.</p>	<p>Prepare Your Business</p> <p>The workbook guides you through the easy steps you can do today to protect your employees’ lives, your livelihood and your years of hard work. The Yolo Ready Workbook is an all-in-one planning tool, designed for busy owners like you.</p>
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YOLO COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL (YCFSC): California Fire Safe Councils help California residents acquire the education, resources, and tools they need to be better prepared for wildfire.

DISCUSSION: From the YCFSC website: *“THE YOLO COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL reduces the risk of wildfire to protect the people, property, and ecological and cultural resources in both urban and rural communities throughout the county from the effects of catastrophic wildfire through education, cooperation, innovation, and action.*

YCFSC was formed in 2021, with coordination between the Yolo County Resource Conservation District and Yolo County Office of Emergency Services, to provide support for wildfire prevention, wildfire response, and post-fire recovery efforts in Yolo County. Our purpose is to: Serve as a forum for the development, update, and implementation of the Yolo County Community Wildfire Protection Plan; Share fire safety information; Assess fire risk; Promote community fire safe planning and coordination; Promote fire management that supports ecological and cultural integrity; Support fire services and local Fire Safe Councils, Prescribed Burn Associations, Firewise Communities, and other similar fire related community groups; Seek available funding for proposed and approved projects to make Yolo County safe from wildfires”

Representatives from the Yolo County Commission on Aging & Adult Services and Yolo County In-Home Supportive Services Advisory Committee are voting members of the YCFSC.

STATUS: Complete.



CONCLUSION AND FINAL COMMENTS

It has been a lengthy but extremely productive journey from the original 9 recommendations made by the Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee to their implementation. There have also been the addition of 5 more recommendations, and the development of several new programs and projects. The county has come a long way in substantially improving emergency preparedness operations, especially for older adults and people with disabilities. Of the 9 original recommendations made by the Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee, 8 have been fully implemented, and 1 still needs to be considered. In addition, of 5 later recommendations that were proffered, 2 have been fully implemented, 2 have been resolved, and 1 is half done.

In addition, a collaborative Disaster Services Council has been formed by OES to implement or modify any recommendations not yet completed, and make further emergency preparedness improvements. Any recommendations are always subject to further refinement or alteration, as best practices in emergency preparedness are constantly evolving.

Because of many factors, including a strong push by the Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee, Yolo OES developed Alert Yolo. It is a flexible enough alert system that it will incorporate information from applicants who sign up to receive alerts on any access and functional needs they may have. And it can send specialized messages to this population, to greatly improve emergency preparedness response.

The Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee also created 6 emergency preparedness modules with handouts, which have been posted to the county's OES website for viewing.

An Access and Functional Needs Working Group has also been established by OES, to better represent those with disabilities in emergency preparedness planning. As a result of the efforts of this group led by OES, a neighborhood readiness program was developed called Yolo Ready. A pilot program was successfully implemented at Rancho Yolo in Davis, CA.

The Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee and the Yolo County Commission on Aging & Adult Services would like to express our deep appreciation to the Board of Supervisors and the Yolo County Office of Emergency Services for their unstinting support for including those individuals with access and functional needs into the county’s emergency planning process.

And a special thanks to Supervisor Provenza, Chair of the Yolo County Commission on Aging and Adult Services, for his leadership in providing us with so much encouragement to achieve what we have, in fact, accomplished.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS SUBCOMMITTEE

Elaine Roberts Musser, Chair
Sheila Allen
Jim Bohlen
Daniel Clayton
Kate Laddish
Margot Loschke
Mariah Piepho
Wally Pierce
Suzanne Reed
Cindi Unger
Siv Windberg

Representatives from Resources for Independent Living