



**NEWS**

**July 7, 2008**

Contact: Laurie Petrie, Communications Director, 513-345-3393

***Be Prepared Ohio***

**Event shows how to help elderly and disabled during emergencies**

During Hurricane Katrina, we watched as some of our country's most vulnerable citizens – seniors and people with disabilities – struggled to get help or find care in the midst of chaos and confusion. Caregivers threw their hands in the air in desperation and exhaustion when medicine, supplies and transportation were nowhere to be found. These images are still fresh in our minds.

On Sept. 22, Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio and the Emergency Preparedness Collaborative will present ***Be Prepared Ohio***, a first-of-its-kind event that will focus on one of the toughest lessons learned during that difficult time in 2005: people with functional needs, such as older adults and people with disabilities, need more help than is normally provided through traditional emergency response systems. We know now that this vulnerable group needs help with advance planning – making an emergency plan, gathering supplies – and they will require special assistance *during* an emergency.

***Be Prepared Ohio*** will bring together emergency responders, public health and social service agencies, people with functional needs and their caregivers to share information and resources on how to prepare for emergencies.

***Be Prepared Ohio* will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. September 22 at the Sharonville Convention Center, 11355 Chester Road, Sharonville. Admission is free.**

The event, held during National Preparedness Month, will include educational sessions for professionals and the general public. Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) will be available for professionals.

Topics include pandemic flu, terrorism, evacuation planning, disaster response in children, and continuity of service to vulnerable populations during emergencies. The sessions will be presented by local and national experts in emergency preparedness, including representatives from the Red Cross, state and county Emergency Management Agencies, and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.

The event will begin with a video message from Gov. Ted Strickland, followed by a welcome message from Hamilton County Commissioner, Todd Portune. Ohio Reps. Dale Mallory and Dr. Shawn Webster will speak on the importance of emergency planning and caring for pets during disasters, respectively. A bomb truck and robot will be on hand for demonstrations throughout the day.

Lanny Taulbee, Disabilities Coordinator for the Division of Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service, will deliver the keynote address at 9 a.m. Taulbee advocates for people with disabilities and helps them navigate the maze of disability-related services. Taulbee will call on his own experience to speak about emergency planning for the elderly and people with disabilities.

For more information, call 513-345-8643 or visit [www.help4seniors.org](http://www.help4seniors.org).

### **About Council on Aging**

Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio (COA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for older adults and their families.

Since 1974, COA has been designated by the state of Ohio as the Area Agency on Aging for Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Hamilton and Warren counties. COA plans, coordinates, funds and administers programs for an area that is home to more than 252,000 adults age 60 and older.

COA promotes choice, independence, dignity and well-being of older adults through a range of services that help them remain in their homes for as long as possible.

One call to COA links people to the wide variety of agencies, information and programs that serve older adults.

### ***For Answers on Aging:***

Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio  
175 Tri County Parkway, Cincinnati, OH 45246  
513-721-1025 Toll-free 1-800-252-0155  
E-mail: [info@help4seniors.org](mailto:info@help4seniors.org).  
Website: [www.help4seniors.org](http://www.help4seniors.org)

### **About the Emergency Preparedness Collaborative**

The Emergency Preparedness Collaborative formed in 2006 to address the special needs of people with disabilities in preparing for and managing their care during emergencies. There are 60 member organizations representing a multi-county area in southwestern Ohio.

Organizations include Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio, Alzheimer's Association, American Red Cross, Butler County Emergency Management Agency, Butler County Health Department, Catholic Social Services of Southwestern Ohio, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati Health Department, Clovernook Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired, Community Counseling and Crisis Center, Greater Cincinnati Health Council, Hamilton County Board of MRDD, Hamilton County Public Health, Hamilton County Administrative Services, Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency, Hearing, Speech and Deaf Center of Cincinnati, Inclusion Network, Jewish Community Center, and Jewish Vocational Service.