

Hurricane Season Readiness: Helping Your Blue Advantage Patients Stay Safe

As hurricane season approaches, Louisiana Blue providers are on the front lines of helping older adults prepare for hurricane season. Not just physically, but emotionally and logistically. Many Blue Advantage patients face unique vulnerabilities during severe weather events, including disruptions to care, both with medication access and support systems.

Proactive conversations can make a meaningful difference. Here are some key topics and Louisiana-specific resources to guide your outreach.

Keep Important Documents Ready And Accessible

Encourage patients to organize essential information before a storm. Identification, credit cards and other necessary supplies are important, as well as current medication and provider or emergency contact numbers.

Blue Advantage members now have access to the MyLABlue app on a smartphone or other device, which will allow access to digital ID cards as well as other health plan information. The app can also help members find a doctor or other in-network care options in the event of an evacuation.

Another suggestion is to encourage your patients to make a list of all household members with their current health needs, medications and dosages, healthcare providers and their contact information.

Create A Plan For Evacuating Or Sheltering In Place

One of the biggest challenges when it comes to hurricanes is the decision to evacuate or remain home. Louisiana Blue recommends people discuss both options with their families well in advance so they can make a quick decision if a storm heads toward Louisiana.

If planning to shelter in place, have supplies on hand and be prepared to lose power or water for several days. If evacuating, decide where to go and which supplies to bring.

Louisiana Blue allows for emergency prescription refills under extenuating circumstances. Individuals can often get a 90-day supply, even if they have had a refill recently.

In addition to medication supply, discuss other health needs with patients. Do they have medications that require refrigeration or equipment that must maintain power? If so, encourage patients to think through how they'd be able to access power or cold storage during a hurricane.

Behavioral Health And Emotional Well-being

Hurricanes can trigger anxiety, especially for patients with prior storm trauma or limited support systems. Encourage patients to discuss these fears and not internalize them. Use behavioral health services when available, such as telehealth visits. Help them focus on what they control, like planning ahead and gathering supplies

Hurricane Season Readiness: Helping Your Medicare Advantage Patients Stay Safe (continued)

Additional Online Resources

For more health-related hurricane preparedness tips, visit www.lablue.com/hurricane or follow Louisiana Blue on social media at My Louisiana Blue. In the event of a hurricane or other crisis, we will post information about services for members such as allowing early prescription refills on the Louisiana Blue website and through social media.

Additional Louisiana resources include the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP)'s Get a Game Plan site, www.getagameplan.org and the Louisiana Department of Health's Bureau of Community Preparedness, <https://ldh.la.gov/emergency>.