



St. Mary's County Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEPARTMENT OF AGING AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO DELIVER EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS SUPPLIES TO SENIORS

First Snowfall Brings Reminder of Winter Preparedness

LEONARDTOWN, MD (December 6, 2007) – St. Mary's County Health Department and the St. Mary's County Department of Aging teamed up Nov. 30 and packed 220 duffel bags with an assortment of emergency preparedness supplies and information just in time for the winter storm season. The duffel bags are being distributed through the Meals on Wheels program to people in St. Mary's County who, in an emergency, would be vulnerable due to age or special need.

The duffel bags are being delivered to homebound seniors over the age of 60 currently receiving services through the County's Meals on Wheels program. The kits will be distributed through mid December.

Jennie Page, Department of Aging deputy director, and Dianne Moison, RN, Bioterrorism Coordinator at the health department, organized the duffel bag give-away with the hope that those receiving the duffel bags would be better prepared for the dangers of winter weather or any other kind of manmade or natural disaster. Volunteers from the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) donated the time needed to fill each bag with supplies.

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This week's Alberta Clipper served as a reminder for St. Mary's County that winter is just around the corner. That could mean the arrival of more snow or subfreezing temperatures, as well as strong winds or even ice or heavy rain storms. One of the health department's primary concerns for the health and safety of the community during this time of year is winter weather's ability to knock out heat, power and communications services, sometimes for days at a time.

"People often feel it is impossible to be prepared for unexpected events," said Moison who works as an emergency planner at the health department, "But the truth is that taking preparedness actions helps people deal with disasters of all sorts much more effectively when they do occur." Seniors have great strength and resiliency from life experience, but are able to further decrease their risk of harm in an emergency, such as an extended winter storm. To prepare, seniors should ask themselves the following questions:

- Do I tire easily?
- Do I need help to see, hear, or walk?
- Do I need to care for another person?
- Do I take daily medication?

Packing an emergency kit and making a plan with the answers to these questions in mind are two important steps to prepare. Staying informed about forecasts and changing weather conditions is an important third consideration. The St. Mary's County Website's Public Safety page is a valuable resource to learn about what local officials will do in the event of an emergency and where to hear the latest emergency announcements.

(more)

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For more information about being prepared for emergencies, please call Dianne Moison, RN, emergency planner at St. Mary's County Health Department at 301-475-4330 or visit the CDCs Website at > <http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/> <.

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Photo caption: *Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) volunteers donated the time needed to fill each bag with supplies. Back Row (L to R): Dianne Moison, RN, St. Mary's County Health Department bioterrorism coordinator; Jayne Hunsinger, Department of Aging manager; Jennie Page, Department of Aging deputy director; RSVP volunteers Lorraine Irwin and Janice Hayden. Front Row (L to R): Volunteers Ann Thomas, Clara Norris, Susanna Wolf and Elsie Marlin.*