ULSTER COUNTY

SPECIAL NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

An Annex to the
Ulster County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

August 2008
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1.0 Introduction

Many people living “on their own” are still dependent on someone else for assistance. It is difficult to determine how many people in the county (still living at home) are dependent on someone else for their daily care. Institutional beds can be counted, but the number of dependent people can change based on the interpretation of “dependent,” or “special need.” A toddler is certainly dependent on his parents, but when he is in their care, he doesn’t have special needs. Likewise, a diabetic may have an insulin dependency, but as long as he has his medication and can self-administer it, he doesn’t have a special need. On the other hand, a bed ridden hospice patient needs a family member, friend or paraprofessional to attend to their most basic needs. We have attempted to provide a definition for a person with special needs; have identified the similarities in the need for emergency planning by the general population and for those with special needs; have emphasized the need for someone with special needs to develop a personal support network; listed some of the expectations of a special needs shelter; and identified agencies that provide home health care on a regular basis and that may be needed as resources during a disaster.

2.0 Defining (and identifying the sheltering differences between) the General Population and the Special Needs Population

Historically, Ulster County residents rarely make use of shelters. Instead they depend on family and friends. However, the demographics of our community are changing and the availability of family and friends to serve in a sheltering capacity may be changing accordingly. The largest utilization of shelter facilities was in January of 1996, during severe flooding. Those using the shelters were primarily stranded travelers.

2.1 General Population

The Ulster County Emergency Management Office has a long-standing and very close working relationship with the Ulster County Chapter of the American Red Cross. During times of disaster, the Ulster County Emergency Management Office coordinates with the Red Cross for all “general population” shelters. The Red Cross uses caches of equipment stored in various locations throughout the County, and staffs the shelters with Red Cross volunteers, or those who have received Red Cross training. The Red Cross actively pursues memorandums of understanding with various municipal, non-profit, religious and private sector partners. The number and location of shelters opened is dependent on the type, location and scope of the disaster. More information on general sheltering can be found in the Mass Sheltering Annex to the Ulster County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.
2.2 Special Needs Population

There is a growing segment of the population that cannot be cared for in a general population shelter. Few people would guess that “49.7 million Americans have one or more disabilities.” After wrestling with many definitions for the “Special Needs of People with Disabilities” we have decided that. A member of the special needs population is defined as a person with physical, cognitive or sensory disability who, during times of emergency, cannot self-evacuate and/or requires assistance during sheltering. An individual who cannot accomplish these tasks on their own is potentially a member of the special needs population. Additionally, a person in a wheelchair might be able to self evacuate their home via a ramp, but may still require assistance during sheltering.

3.0 Basic Emergency Planning

Planning for an emergency or disaster is everyone’s responsibility. The United States Department of Homeland Security through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the New York State Emergency Management Office, the American Red Cross and the Ulster County Emergency Management Office all recommend that every person and every family develop a disaster plan and put together a disaster kit. Each person and family should plan to be self-sufficient for a minimum of three days.

Having a family disaster plan is important for the general population, it is even more important that people with special needs develop and practice a plan. Fires are one of the most common hazards faced by residents of Ulster County (and across the country). Each year the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) comes up with a theme for Fire Prevention Week. Past themes have included EDITH for Exit Drills In The Home, Fire Won’t Wait…Plan Your Escape, Fire Drills: The Great Escape. It is important that everyone knows two ways out of every room. If anyone is unable to self-evacuate, plans for how that person is removed from the building, and who is going to accomplish this task, must be formulated before the fire. Once out of the building a central meeting place, in a safe location, should be established. This concept holds true when it is necessary to evacuate your home or community. Identify a relative or friend living in a remote community as the focal point that family members will either meet at, or at least be able to call to verify the safety of all family members.

It is important to know how to safely turn off the utilities to your home if it is necessary to evacuate. During flood conditions, services such as gas and electric are often turned off building by building, or sometimes to an entire neighborhood.

If you had to leave your home, or could not return to it from work, how would you reproduce your important papers? Do you have a current inventory of the contents of your home? Important papers (eg a deed to your home, rental agreement, bank records, etc) should be stored in a safe deposit box or other secure location.

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1 National Center for Health Statistics
A large percentage of American homes have a pet, many have more than one. Most general population shelters will not allow animals in the shelter. It is necessary to have a plan on where to house your animals should you have to leave home. If you are planning to take them with you, they should have had their shots, bring a leash, food and water. Remember, service animals (seeing eye dogs, etc) are usually the only animals allowed in shelters.

Part of your disaster plan should include developing skills that can be of use not only to your family during times of disaster, but to your neighbors and community as well. It is a great asset to have a basic knowledge of first aid, and how to handle a fire extinguisher. Check with your local fire department or ambulance squad on how to obtain training.

Members of the special needs population may not only require assistance in getting out of a building, they may need assistance with transportation to a shelter, and may even require on-going care. Make certain that anyone you have identified in your plan to provide special assistance is aware of their role.

The “Are You Ready” publication from FEMA offers a wealth of information on what to include in your disaster supplies kit. Items that should be in the kit include:

- Three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Three-day supply of water - one gallon of water per person, per day.
- Portable, battery-powered radio or television and extra batteries.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- First aid kit and manual.
- Sanitation and hygiene items (moist towelettes and toilet paper).
- Matches and waterproof container.
- Whistle.
- Extra clothing.
- Kitchen accessories and cooking utensils, including a can opener.
- Photocopies of credit and identification cards.
- Cash and coins.
- Special needs items, such as prescription medications, eye glasses, contact lens solutions, and hearing aid batteries.
- Items for infants, such as formula, diapers, bottles, and pacifiers.
- Other items to meet your unique family needs.²

4.0 People with Special Needs in a Disaster

4.1 Institutions Serving the Special Needs Populations

Hospitals, nursing homes, group homes, etc are all entrusted with the care of special needs populations on a daily basis. These facilities have plans on how to evacuate...
their patients or clients, and where these residents will be sheltered until they can reoccupy the primary facility. Some institutions are mandated by the New York State Department of Health to have these plans, others have developed them to conform to The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHCO) standards, others simply developed their plans because it is the right thing to do. If one of these facilities needed to evacuate their population, those residents would remain “patients of the facility”. If you are entrusting an institution with the long term care of a loved one, you are completely within your rights to ask about their disaster / emergency plans.

The focus of this plan is on those persons, living at home, with physical, cognitive or sensory disability who, during times of emergency, cannot self-evacuate and/or require assistance during sheltering.

4.2 Personal Support Network

Members of the special needs population (and their caregivers) need to take extra precautions to prepare for an emergency. Despite this, “61% of people with disabilities have not made plans to quickly and safely evacuate their homes”.3 Perhaps the most important thing someone in the special needs population needs to do is create a personal support network. “If you anticipate needing assistance during a disaster, make a list of family, friends and others who will be part of your plan. Talk to these people and ask them to be part of your support network. Share each aspect of your emergency plan with everyone in your group, including a friend or relative in another area who would not be impacted by the same emergency who can help if necessary. Make sure everyone knows how you plan to evacuate your home, school or workplace and where you will go in case of a disaster. Make sure that someone in your personal support network has an extra key to your home and knows where you keep your emergency supplies. Teach them how to use any lifesaving equipment or administer medicine in case of an emergency. If you use a wheelchair, oxygen or other medical equipment show friends how to use these devices so they can move you if necessary or help you evacuate. Practice your plan with those who have agreed to be part of your personal support network.”4

It is not realistic to assume that Ulster County or our disaster partners can supply the same level of service or care that a member of the special needs population requires on a daily basis. Therefore it cannot be overemphasized that a personnel support network is critical to the health and well-being of someone with special needs during a disaster.

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4.3 Registering with Emergency Services

In addition to formalizing their personal support network with family and friends, members of the special needs population may register with the Ulster County Emergency Management Office. Appendix 1 is a registration form that contains information such as the resident’s name, address, contact information, caregiver, and information about their special needs or disabilities. By voluntarily completing a registration form, the resident authorizes that all information provided may be shared with the local police, fire and emergency medical services, as well as the Ulster County Health Department, American Red Cross and other disaster partners. Additionally, if the resident indicates they utilize medical equipment that is dependent on electricity, the information will also be shared with the local utility. The registrant absolves the County and agencies receiving this information from the patient confidentiality requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Registration information must be updated annually. Registration forms may be submitted at any time during the year, but in all cases, the registration data base will be purged on January 1 of the new year, or as soon thereafter as possible. Additionally, a resident may request that their information be removed from the data base at any time. Placing a registration form on file does not guarantee an immediate response from emergency services personnel, nor does it bind the County or emergency service agencies to providing extraordinary measures to evacuate, transport or shelter a registrant.

4.4 Evacuation & Transportation

Residents with special needs that require assistance with transportation will be provided with such specialized transportation (wheel chair coaches / ambulettes, ambulances, etc.) within the available resources of Ulster County. It must be understood that during times of disaster, available resources will be spread very thin and alternative means of transportation developed in the personal support network planning process should be utilized. It is also very important to evacuate as soon as the order is given, and when transportation resources are available.

4.5 Sheltering for the Special Needs Population

4.5.1 In Place Sheltering

There are instances where it is more desirable to shelter in place; other situations require an evacuation. You should be prepared to do either. In many situations it is prudent to shelter in place. This means to remain where you are and take whatever measures may be recommended by the emergency services. These measures may include closing doors and windows and turning off the HVAC system; drinking bottled water or boiling water instead of taking it straight from the tap; not allowing pets to go outside, etc. The reason a shelter in place order would be given is that either the situation is only
marginal, or it is riskier to attempt a full evacuation. In either case, it may be necessary to stay inside your place of residence for an extended period. Adequate food and water should be stored in the home for such eventualities. Consideration should be given to installing a generator for emergency power. The special needs of the vulnerable population must also be addressed in a shelter in place scenario. Adequate medical equipment and supplies should be maintained as well as other essential items.

4.5.2 Special Needs Shelters

The Emergency Management Office directs the opening and closing of shelters. This order may have been given several hours before the public will be ordered to begin evacuation. This decision is passed to the Public Information Office in the Ulster County Legislature for public dissemination. NY-Alert may also be used for notifications.

Shelter facilities for both the general population and the special needs population offer little privacy and cannot be categorized as luxurious. Accommodations are often in schools or other municipal buildings. Shelters should be considered by those who cannot make alternative arrangements to stay with family or friends. This is especially true for those with special needs. All special needs shelters will be assigned an EMS provider or a nurse. These professionals can assist the special needs patient with taking their own prescribed medication, but they cannot order or fill prescriptions. It is essential that special needs clients bring their own medications, and special supplies (oxygen, colostomy bags, etc).

Due to the specialized requirements (facilities and personnel) of a shelter to serve people with disabilities, it is planned that only a single special needs shelter be opened at a time. The primary shelter will be at the Athletic and Wellness Center at SUNY New Paltz. However, other facilities could be pressed into service should the State University be unavailable.

The American Red Cross will not staff or operate special needs shelters. However, the ARC may provide guidance and basic supplies (eg cots, blankets) in the overall sheltering effort. Direct supervision of the special needs shelter will be provided by the Ulster County Health Department. Paramount is the concept that the care giver should be prepared to stay with the special needs evacuee and render the same level and type care they provide at home. People with special needs utilizing the shelter should have their care givers bring with them supplies and equipment necessary for their immediate comfort and survival. Although an EMS provider and/or nurse will be on duty, and additional supplies may be brought in as needed (medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, oxygen, etc.) a special needs shelter is not a temporary hospital. It will function to provide the basic needs of people with disabilities.

- Within the shelter, efforts will be taken to separate patients based on their medical condition or special needs.
- Translators will be made available on an as-needed basis.
• Service animals (seeing eye dogs, etc) will be permitted in special needs shelters. Other pets will not be allowed in the shelter.
• To the extent possible, special dietary considerations will be made.

4.6 Returning Home

Returning home after a disaster must be done in an orderly, non-emergent manner. Precautions must be taken to ensure that the home is accessible, habitable (having been declared safe by emergency services, the local building inspector / code enforcement official, and utility company) and can meet the special needs of the vulnerable residents. Special needs shelter may have to remain open slightly longer while these issues are addressed, or until alternate living arrangements can be made.

5.0 Resources / Special Needs Partners

The special needs of people with disabilities are met on a daily basis by various public and private service agencies. These agencies provide physical and mental health patient care, in both the home and institutional settings. Other services provide transportation or equipment / supplies to the homebound. On a daily basis, these services provide many of the basic needs of their clients. In some cases they have significant resources. Appendix 2 is a list of agencies serving the special needs population. These agencies have not committed to providing resources during an emergency, but it is prudent to pre-identify the personnel, facilities, transportation capabilities, supplies and other resources these agencies have to offer. During times of disaster, service agencies may be called upon to not only care for their existing client base, but to assist with the care of others as well.
Appendix 1

People with Special Needs Database – Client Information Sheet

Please return completed forms to:
Ulster County Emergency Management Office
238 Golden Hill Lane
Kingston, NY 12401
845-331-7000 (phone)
845-331-1738 (fax)

Name ________________________________ Male___ Female___

Address ________________________________________________________________

City ________________________________ State _________ Zip __________

Telephone __________________________ Alternate phone ____________________

Date of birth ________________________

Directions to the individual’s home: _______________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

Nearest emergency contact outside the household: Relative___ Neighbor ___ Friend ___

Name __________________________________________________________________

Address ________________________________________________________________

City ________________________________ State _________ Zip ________

Telephone __________________________ Alternate phone ____________________

Other emergency contacts

Name ________________________________ Phone _______________________

Name ________________________________ Phone _______________________

Name ________________________________ Phone _______________________
**Ulster County Emergency Management**  
**Special Needs of People with Disabilities**

### Impairments
- _Visually Impaired_
- _Hearing Impaired_
- _Speech Impaired_
- _Non-English Speaking_

### Mental Conditions
- _Alert_
- _Semi-confused_
- _Confused_
- _Unconscious_

### Walking Ability
- _Independent_
- _Needs assistance_
- _Unable to walk_

### Medical Condition
- _Catheter/Ostomy_
- _Cardiac_
- _Stroke_
- _Seizures_
- _Diabetic_
- _Asthma_
- _Paraplegic_
- _Quadriplegic_
- _Special Diet_
- _Dementia_

### Equipment Needs
- _Oxygen_
- _Nebulizer_
- _Respirator_
- _Suction_
- _IV_
- _Dialysis_
- _Tube feeding_
- _Walker/crutches/cane_
- _Wheelchair_
- _Working animal (seeing eye dog)_

### Method of Transport
- _Car_
- _Wheelchair coach_
- _Stretcher_
- _Ambulance_

### Method of Communication
- _Verbal_
- _Sign language_
- _Communications device_

Please list other medical conditions not listed above, and medications you are taking:

_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

Physician’s name ______________________________ Phone __________________

Hospital of preference ___________________________________________________

The information gathered above will be used if it is necessary to evacuate your home and place you in a shelter. It will be shared with local emergency services agencies, the Ulster County Health Department, the American Red Cross and other agencies directly involved with transporting and sheltering the special needs population during a disaster.

If you are medically dependent on electrically powered equipment, may we share your information with the local utility? Yes______ No _____  Initial _____

The information above must be updated annually. Registration forms may be submitted at any time during the year, but in all cases, the registration data base will be purged on January 1 of the new year, or as soon thereafter as possible. Additionally, a resident may request that their information be removed from the data base at any time.

**Placing a registration form on file does not guarantee an immediate response from emergency services personnel, nor does it bind the County or emergency service agencies to providing extraordinary measures to evacuate, transport or shelter a registrant.** You will not be personally notified of emergencies in your area if evacuations are not necessary.

Sign Here:_________________________________________   Date: ________________
## Appendix 2

### Special Needs Partners

#### Aging – Adult Day Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City</th>
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<tr>
<td>Canal Lodge Adult Day Care</td>
<td>647-8461</td>
<td>647-8479</td>
<td>221 Canal St</td>
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<td>Greenkill Ave Adult Day Care</td>
<td>339-3679</td>
<td>339-7863</td>
<td>107 Greenkill Ave</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multi-County Community Development</td>
<td>691-7419</td>
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<td>Ten Broeck Commons</td>
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<td>336-4014</td>
<td>1 Commons Dr</td>
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<td>Golden Hill Health Care</td>
<td>340-3390</td>
<td>340-3828</td>
<td>99 Golden Hill Dr</td>
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#### Aging – Adult Homes

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<td>Cullinarian Home Foundation</td>
<td>255-7010</td>
<td>255-2012</td>
<td>71 Old Tshirkey Rd</td>
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<td>Hudson Valley Sr Residence</td>
<td>331-0630</td>
<td>331-6093</td>
<td>80 Washington Ave</td>
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<td>Moran’s Rest Home</td>
<td>883-7115</td>
<td>883-5304</td>
<td>1741 State Rt 32</td>
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#### Aging – Assisted Living

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<td>Valley Vista</td>
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<td>691-3787</td>
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<td>Village View</td>
<td>691-8399</td>
<td>691-3816</td>
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#### Aging – General

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<td>Retired &amp; Senior Volunteer Program</td>
<td>339-2181</td>
<td>339-2164</td>
<td>409 Development Ct</td>
<td>Kingston</td>
<td>12401</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Health Care Solutions</td>
<td>914-388-4447</td>
<td>883-5333</td>
<td>PO Box 243</td>
<td>Plattekill</td>
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<td>UC Office of the Aging</td>
<td>340-3456</td>
<td>340-3583</td>
<td>1003 Development Ct</td>
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#### Aging – Residential

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<td>Golden Hill Health Care</td>
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<td>99 Golden Hill Dr</td>
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<td>Hudson Valley Rehab/ Extended Care</td>
<td>691-7201</td>
<td>691-7201</td>
<td>260 Vineyard Ave</td>
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<td>Northeast Center for Special Care</td>
<td>336-3500</td>
<td>336-7899</td>
<td>300 Grant Ave</td>
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<td>Ten Broeck Commons</td>
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<td>336-4014</td>
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<td>Mountain View Nursing Cntr</td>
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#### Chemical Dependence

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<td>Child &amp; Family Guidance Cntr</td>
<td>691-9191</td>
<td>691-9339</td>
<td>106 Vineyard Ave</td>
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<td>Kingston Hospital</td>
<td>334-2866</td>
<td>334-2863</td>
<td>396 Broadway</td>
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<td>Never Alone</td>
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<td>340-0303</td>
<td>20 Crofts Rd</td>
<td>Hurley</td>
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<td>Rehabilitation Support Srvcs</td>
<td>246-2645</td>
<td>246-6802</td>
<td>11 Overbaugh St</td>
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<td>Renaissance Project</td>
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<td>St Cabrini Home</td>
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<td>Samaritan Village</td>
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<td>Veritas Villa</td>
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### Disabilities – Mental Retardation / Developmental Disabilities

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<td>336-2112</td>
<td>30 Denver Rd</td>
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<td>Children’s Annex</td>
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<td>331-2112</td>
<td>1 Amy Kay Parkway</td>
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<td>NYS OMRDD-DDSO</td>
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<td>382-1935</td>
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<td>UC DSS Early Intervention</td>
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<td>United Cerebral Palsy of UC</td>
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<td>334-9753</td>
<td>25 Webster St</td>
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<td>VESID</td>
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<td>339-4620</td>
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### Disabilities – Mobility Impaired

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<tr>
<td>Alamo Wheelchair Transport</td>
<td>471-3315</td>
<td>471-2226</td>
<td>3590 US Rt 9W</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Homepatient</td>
<td>463-3100</td>
<td>463-2385</td>
<td>2494 South Rd</td>
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<td>Captain Vantastic</td>
<td>384-6207</td>
<td>384-6247</td>
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<td>Esopus</td>
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<td>Home Therapy Equipment</td>
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<td>331-2076</td>
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<td>Resource Center for Accessible</td>
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<td>338-0223</td>
<td>70 Lindsley Ave</td>
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### Economically Disadvantaged Population

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<td>340-1753</td>
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<td>339-0549</td>
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<td>331-6217</td>
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<td>334-5226</td>
<td>1051 Development Ct</td>
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### General

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Red Cross</td>
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<td>331-6913</td>
<td>21 O’Neil St</td>
<td>Kingston</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Way of Ulster Co</td>
<td>331-4199</td>
<td>334-5301</td>
<td>450 Albany Ave</td>
<td>Kingston</td>
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## Medical Conditions – Home Health Care Agencies

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Phone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always There</td>
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<td>339-7319</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any Time Home Care</td>
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<td>340-0733</td>
<td>652 Aaron Ct</td>
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<td>Apria Healthcare</td>
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<td>Bernac Home Aides</td>
<td>255-4200</td>
<td>255-8947</td>
<td>2 Grove St</td>
<td>New Paltz</td>
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<td>Care Alternative of the Mid-Hudson Valley</td>
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<td>Home Health Care &amp; Companion Agency</td>
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<td>331-2161</td>
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<td>Hospice of Ulster County</td>
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<td>338-7321</td>
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<td>Hudson Valley Long Term Home Healthcare</td>
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<td>691-6408</td>
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<td>One-to-One Care</td>
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<td>7 Cottonwood Cir</td>
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<td>Ulster Home Health Services</td>
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<td>Willcare</td>
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<td>331-0492</td>
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## Medical Conditions – Long Term – General

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<td>UC Health Dept – LTC</td>
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## Medical Conditions – Other

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<td>American Cancer Society</td>
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## Mental Health

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<tbody>
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<td>Benedictine Hospital</td>
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<td>Families Now</td>
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<td>853-7184</td>
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<td>Kids Peace National Cntr</td>
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<td>331-3572</td>
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<td>Mental Health Assoc</td>
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<td>336-0192</td>
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<td>Kingston</td>
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<td>Multi-County Community Development</td>
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<td>247-9120</td>
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<td>NYS OMH – Hudson River Field Office</td>
<td>454-8229</td>
<td>454-8218</td>
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<td>331-4973</td>
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