



COUNCIL

Thomas J. McGarrigle
Chairman

Mario J. Civera, Jr.
Vice Chairman

Colleen P. Morrone
John P. McBlain
David J. White

COUNTY OF DELAWARE
GOVERNMENT CENTER BUILDING
201 W. FRONT STREET
MEDIA, PENNSYLVANIA

610-891-4931
FAX NUMBER 610-891-8055
E-MAIL: delcopr@co.delaware.pa.us

Department of Public Relations
William A. Lovejoy, Jr.
Director

For Immediate Release
01/18/12
Contact: Trish Cofell
Communications Officer
610-891-4943

County Council Advises Residents on Resources That Assist People During ‘Code Blue’ Conditions

Delaware County Council reminds residents that various County agencies offer additional supports to the homeless, elderly and vulnerable residents when “Code Blue” conditions take place during winter months.

When temperatures drop below freezing, and conditions pose a threat to individuals who are homeless or medically fragile, a network of agencies goes to work to help people obtain shelter, food and clothing.

“There are several ways that County agencies try to help residents cope with extreme weather conditions, from sheltering the homeless to reaching out to the elderly,” said County Councilman David J. White, Council’s liaison to Human Services. “It’s important for residents to know about these services so we can look out for each other, and everyone can stay safe and healthy.”

- The **Delaware County Adult Services Division** of the Office of Behavioral Health partners with various agencies to offer additional services through the Homeless Services Coalition of Delaware County.
- The **County Office of Services for the Aging (COSA)** extends outreach to senior citizens, including having case managers check on seniors who may be vulnerable.
- The **County Department of Intercommunity Health** provides information to help people avoid medical emergencies, such as hypothermia and frost bite, during Code Blue conditions.

Councilman White said homeless shelters in the county are reporting a significant increase in the number of single adults seeking shelter and services. Three shelter programs have added overflow beds to accommodate additional people.

White detailed the expanded services that are put into place during harsh weather conditions.

“Delaware County has many programs that assist homeless people year-round, but we want to stress that extra precautions are taking place during the winter months,” White said. “We especially want our local police and social services agencies to know about these resources as they come in contact with residents who might need help.”

When the temperature drops to 32 degrees or below, a network of agencies goes to work to help people obtain shelter, food and clothing. The county’s Adult Services Division, based in Upper Darby, participates in the leadership of the Homeless Services Coalition, a group of 100 individuals and organizations dedicated to assisting the homeless. During a Code Blue, authorities can take homeless adults to shelter programs, which are operated by the Salvation Army Chester Corps and Connect, a project of the Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania.

(more)

(Code Blue continued)

The Salvation Army Warming Center program normally accommodates 35 persons per night. During a Code Blue, they have the capacity to add up to 10 additional beds. When not utilizing their own facility for shelter, the Salvation Army transports people to host churches. The Salvation Army Day Center is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and the shelter programs runs from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m.

The Mental Health Association's Connect-by Night (CBN) Program transports folks to host churches from their new office located at 7200 Chestnut Street in Upper Darby. Depending upon the capacity at each church, CBN will add five overflow beds. The Connect program is open 7 a.m.-10 p.m. and transportation to the host churches begins at 9 p.m.

Both program offer street outreach, case management and a variety of supportive services geared toward helping homeless person access services and work toward self-sufficiency.

In addition, homeless adults can find shelter at the Life Center of Eastern Delaware County in Upper Darby. The Life Center is a 50-bed shelter for single adults and will make available 15 overflow slots on Code Blue evenings. All homeless families with children can be referred to the Community Action Agency, which offers emergency shelter programs and other assistance.

Christine Seibert, Adult Services coordinator, said her office works with individuals and agencies that encounter homeless people, including municipal officials, hospitals, police and social workers.

It is estimated that there are more than 650 homeless people in Delaware County. An annual count of homeless people will be conducted on the evening of Jan. 24 by the Homeless Services Coalition.

Each year, the Office of Adult Services distributes an updated Emergency Shelter Directory to all police stations, municipalities, hospital emergency rooms and social service agencies. In addition, the office publishes a Survival Guide that details a variety of services from shelters to meals. Both of these resources are posted on the County website at www.co.delaware.pa.us.

For people who are not homeless, but may encounter cold-weather difficulty there are other resources, including the Community Action Agency, the county's official anti-poverty agency assisting economically disadvantaged county residents.

Another resource is the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), a federal program that takes applications for crisis grants. Call 1-866-857-7095.

People who are over age 60 and need assistance during a Code Blue can also contact the County Office of Services for the Aging (COSA) at 610 490-1300. COSA Director Louis Colbert said COSA's case managers look in on elderly residents who might be vulnerable during extreme weather conditions.

"With more cold weather ahead of us, we want to ensure the health and safety of all of our residents," said Councilman White. "We encourage people to check on neighbors, elderly friends and family members and pets during the winter months to ensure that they have enough heat and food to get through periods of bad weather."

* **For information** or to obtain a copy of the current Emergency Shelter Directory and Survival Guide, contact Adult Services at 610-713-2571 or 610-713-2365.

* **Resources** include:

Salvation Army: 151 W. 15th St., Chester. Call 610-874-0423

Connect: 7200 Chestnut St., Upper Darby. Call 267-507-3970.

Community Action Agency: Call 610-874-8451.

* For **winter safety tips** to avoid medical emergencies due to extreme temperatures, consult the Centers for Disease Control at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/>