State of Wisconsin
Council on Physical Disabilities

1 WEST WILSON ST., ROOM 551
PO BOX 2659
MADISON, WI 53701

Voice: 608-266-9354
Fax: 608-267-3203
https://cpd.wisconsin.gov

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***
***Tuesday, September 5, 2017***

***PRESS RELEASE***

**CONTACTS:** Ben Barrett, Chairman of Council, 715-939-0849
Karen Secor, Chair of Emergency Preparedness Committee, 715-360-0710

# Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities Releases its Emergency Preparedness Toolkit for People with Disabilities

## *Be Prepared, Have a Plan: Emergency Preparedness Toolkit*

**MADISON, WI** — The Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities is pleased to announce the completion and availability of the *Be Prepared, Have a Plan: Emergency Preparedness Toolkit for Persons with Disabilities*. The toolkit is a product of over ten years of work by past and present members of the Council. After witnessing what happened to people with physical disabilities in the wake of hurricanes Rita and Katrina, the Council knew more work needed to be done to ensure the safety and protect the lives of people, especially those with physical disabilities, before and during emergencies and natural disasters including but not limited to floods, fires, tornadoes, power outages, and chemical spills.

"With the most recent natural disaster, Hurricane Harvey, the Council wanted to make sure everyone was aware of the toolkit and could use it to plan before an emergency happens," said Ben Barrett, Chairman of the Council.

The toolkit serves as a resource and provides all people, particularly those individuals with physical or other disabilities with emergency preparedness information including:

- Safety Tips,
- Checklists (General, Car, Disability, Important Documents),
- Medical Emergency Wallet Card,
- Visual Communications Tool,
- Family Emergency Planning Form,
- Basic Fire Escape Planning,
- Evacuation Planning Guide,
- Tips for Professionals and Volunteers when Assisting with People with Disabilities and the Elderly,
- Emergency Information Form for Children with Special Needs, and
- Emergency Preparedness Apps and Resource Apps for Volunteers, Emergency Responders, and People with Disabilities.

"The Council considered all disabilities when designing the toolkit and deciding what materials to include in order to make it accessible for all people," stated Karen Secor, Chair of the Emergency Preparedness Committee of the Council. "For example, the visual communications tool could be used in an emergency situation to communicate with someone who is Deaf or hard-of-hearing, if an interpreter was not available, or with a person who is non-verbal." "Planning is especially important for the elderly and people with disabilities as they have additional needs to consider including medical conditions, transportation, and accessibility.

That is why the toolkit's disability checklist assists people with disabilities in planning for items they would need to take with them in emergency situations such as medications, signaling devices, communication devices, assistive technology devices, and mobility devices (including ways to power them)," said Karen Secor.

The Council has also prepared two presentations for the toolkit. The general presentation includes information on the Council and what tools and resources are included in the toolkit. The outreach presentation is targeted to service providers, first responders, volunteers, and other stakeholders who may have to respond and work with people with disabilities and/or access and functional needs during an emergency or natural disaster. The outreach presentation includes the items listed in the general presentation as well as Psychological First Aid, disability sensitivity training video, disability etiquette, and apps designed for volunteers and first responders working with people with disabilities.

To view the toolkit in its entirety and the additional tools, resources, and presentations the Council has created, please visit: https://cpd.wisconsin.gov/toolkit.htm.

##

***Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities***

The Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities (Council) was created by the state legislature in 1989. The Council envisions a world where all people with physical disabilities have access to the same life choices and opportunities as any other Wisconsin citizen. The Council is comprised of 14 members appointed by the Governor. One Council position is reserved for the Governor's representative, and the rest are unpaid volunteers. At least six members must be people with physical disabilities, two members may be parents, guardians, or relatives of a person with a physical disability, and one member must be a service provider to people with physical disabilities.

The Council's mission, established by state statute 46.29 is to:

- Develop and implement a state plan for services to people with physical disabilities.
- Advise and make recommendations to state agencies on relevant legislation.
- Promote public awareness about the abilities of and barriers to people with physical disabilities.
- Encourage the development of programs and policies that prevent physical disabilities.
- Submit recommendations in an annual report to the state legislature.

To learn more about the Council, please visit: https://cpd.wisconsin.gov/index.htm.