



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
BUREAU OF TENNCARE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 8, 2005

TENNCARE COVERAGE ONLY AVAILABLE TO KATRINA EVACUEES WHO QUALIFY FOR FEDERAL MEDICAID PROGRAM

ENROLLMENT IN TENNCARE NOT AVAILABLE TO EVACUEES OR OTHERS
WHO DO NOT QUALIFY FOR MEDICAID

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Evacuees from hurricane Katrina who qualify for federal Medicaid coverage can receive health care services in Tennessee, but evacuees can not automatically receive TennCare coverage, the TennCare Bureau clarified today.

“TennCare remains open to all Tennesseans who meet federal Medicaid criteria,” said TennCare Director, J.D. Hickey. “For Katrina evacuees, enrollment in TennCare is available only if they meet eligibility requirements – just as it continues to be available for all Tennesseans under those same parameters. Whether an individual is in Tennessee because of the hurricane or for any other reason, they must meet federal Medicaid eligibility requirements before they can be enrolled in TennCare.”

The issue of eligibility for evacuees of hurricane Katrina is based on federal Medicaid eligibility guidelines. For evacuees who are already enrolled in Medicaid in their hurricane-affected states, the home state will pay for the health care services received in Tennessee. Evacuees who intend to remain in Tennessee and apply for TennCare coverage must meet the same eligibility requirements as any Tennessean, including residency.

Governor Bredesen has instructed TennCare and other state departments to take appropriate efforts to help the people affected by this disaster. The first priority is to provide care. TennCare Director, J.D. Hickey, last week sent communications to the state’s health care providers urging them to deliver appropriate care, knowing most evacuees will not have the normally required documentation. In addition, the TennCare Bureau has posted information on its web site that instructs providers on how to be reimbursed for care provided to Medicaid enrollees from Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. That information can be found at the following address: <http://www.tn.gov/tenncare/news.html>

“We continue to offer all appropriate assistance and encourage the federal authorities to make 100 percent matching funds available for disaster-related Medicaid reimbursements,” Hickey said.

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