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Commissioner
www.nyc.gov

2008 Health Update #12
FREE AIR CONDITIONERS FOR HIGH RISK POPULATIONS

Please distribute this health update and attached materials to staff in the Departments of Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Family Medicine, Neurology, Emergency Medicine, Critical Care, Psychiatry, Geriatrics, Cardiology, Oncology, Endocrinology, Rheumatology, Rehabilitation Medicine, Nephrology, and Pulmonology.

- **Patients at increased risk for heat-related illness or exacerbation of a chronic health condition may be eligible for free air conditioners.**
- **Supplies of free air conditioners are limited. Applicants must submit a written statement from their health care provider documenting a health condition that increases vulnerability to heat.**

June 11, 2008

Dear Colleague,

Patients at risk for heat-related morbidity and mortality should apply for a **free air conditioner with installation** through the NYS Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). At-risk patients must submit a written statement from their health care provider documenting that the patient has a medical or psychiatric condition or takes medication that increases her/his risk for heat-related illness. Instructions for patients and providers are included below.

The risk factors for heat-related morbidity and mortality include:

- Age 65 years and older or 4 years and younger
- Chronic medical or psychiatric conditions such as congestive heart failure, diabetes, emphysema, and dementia
- Use of medications that impede thermoregulation
- Social isolation
- Limited mobility or confinement to bed

Heat-related mortality is preventable, yet on average more Americans die from heat waves than all other natural disasters combined. Extreme heat can cause heat stroke and hyperthermia, and also exacerbate existing medical conditions possibly leading to death. Staying in a cool, air-conditioned environment is the best prevention.

During a heat wave, health care providers should:

- Be alert to heat-related illness or exacerbation of chronic medical conditions, such as heart or lung disease.
- Advise at-risk patients to use air conditioning or get to an air conditioned place. To find a Cooling Center, call 311 or go to www.nyc.gov/oem.

For additional information see the attached fact sheet or call the Environmental and Occupational Disease Epidemiology Program at 212-788-4290. NYC DOHMH is a partner in a citywide effort to prevent morbidity and mortality during heat waves.



Thank you,

Nancy Clark

Nathan Graber

Thomas Matte

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Attachments:

- Information for Health Care Providers on Heat-Related Morbidity and Mortality
- 2008 Cooling Assistance Program Application and Cover Letter from Department of Aging

Template for written statement from health care provider

Health care provider letterhead or prescription

Date

Re: 2008 Cooling Assistance Program

Name: _____, DOB: _____, age _____ years, is a patient under my care. S/he has a medical or psychiatric condition or takes medication that increases his/her risk for heat-related illness during a heat wave.

As her/his health care provider, I strongly advise that s/he use an air conditioner at home during a heat wave to prevent serious heat-related illness and possibly death. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Signature of health care provider

Contact information

Application information for free air conditioners for at-risk patients (Please see attachments)

- Patients can submit applications for free air conditioners beginning May 1, 2008 for as long as supplies last.
- Applicants must meet HEAP income eligibility criteria. Patients can determine eligibility by going to www.otda.state.ny.us/main/heap/#eligible or calling 1-800-342-3009.
- A written statement from the health care provider documenting that the patient is at risk for heat-related illness must accompany the application.
- At-risk patients age 60 and over must apply through the NYC Department for the Aging. See contact information below.
- At-risk patients under age 60 must apply through the appropriate Weatherization Assistance Program sub-grantee based on residence. See contact information below.



Application information

For at-risk patients 60 years of age and over:	
All NYC residents	NYC Department for the Aging (DFTA) WRAP – 2008 CAP 2 Lafayette Street, 16 th Floor New York, NY 10007 Call 311
For at-risk patients under 60 years of age:	
Manhattan residents	Northern Manhattan Improvement Corp Dan Rieber, Director Phone: 212-822-8300
Bronx residents	Bronx Shepherds Restoration Corp Barry Seebachan, Director Phone: 718-299-0500
	Association for Energy Affordability Francis Rodriguez, Director Phone: 718-292-6733, ext. 211
Queens residents	Margert Community Corp Suzanne Miller, Director Phone: 718-471-3724
	Community Environmental Center, Inc Olga Souto, Coordinator Phone: 718-784-1444, ext. 118
Brooklyn Residents	Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corp Wendell Rice, Director Phone: 718-638-5705
Staten Island residents	Northfield Community Development Corp Jim Reilly, Director Phone: 718-442-7351, ext 41

The 2008 Cooling Assistance Program is a collaboration with the NYS Office for Temporary and Disability Assistance, NYS Office for Aging, NYC Department for the Aging, NYC DOHMH and the NYC Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services. For more information about HEAP, visit: www.otda.state.ny.us/main/heap/default.htm.