

**Working Conference on Emergency Management and
Individuals with Disabilities and the Elderly
June 28-30, 2006**

Session Summary Form

Send Completed *Session Summary Forms* to Glenda Harden at glenda.harden@acf.hhs.gov by COB July 7, 2006.

Session: State Working Group Regional Working Group

Date of Session: Wednesday, June 28 Thursday, June 29 Friday, June 30

State: _____

Region: Region VI_____

Facilitator Name: Hal Neuman_____

Submitted by (your name): Sara Vecchiotti_____

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- 1. List and describe in narrative at least the three most important issues that were addressed during the session.**

1. Red Cross was a problem-refusing to serve PWD, different policies on serving PWD across staff and centers, staff ill-trained and had a lack of social skills, unwillingness to share information about evacuees in shelters, and staff were culturally unaware etc.

2. Displacement of local Red Cross chapters to regional and national chapters—was a trade-off in the sense that resources were combined and no longer spread thin but staff were no longer informed about the local populations and their distinct needs.

3. Restriction in the Medicaid program for community based services prevented OK from serving PWD well. Regulations regarding cross-State operations required placing some PWD in institutions and not with families or in shelters—as a result OK had to use their own community funds to serve evacuees with disabilities, which limited service to the population. Reimbursement funds should follow the person, but this is not the case, there was no way to transfer funds from one State to another to serve the evacuee. (In some States there are some in-state operations through Medicaid which allow the funds to follow the person across agencies in State, but no such provisions across States. Some PWD affected by Katrina did not evacuate across State lines because of this problem).

2. List and describe in narrative at least the three biggest challenges or barriers discussed.

[In select cases may mean that you repeat something you reported under #1]

1. (See barriers mentioned in #1 above) Three problems with the Red Cross---
1. limited access to shelters for PWD, some were turned away, 2. access to info on evacuees was not shared, and 3. no access to shelters by crisis response teams (government agencies) and 4. policies changed according to the staff present at the center at the time

2. Red Cross and FEMA not equipped to help evacuees in the long-term to help evacuees recover and restore their lives, only limited to sheltering and mass medical care and feeding.

3. Since staff seem to be ill-trained on what the policies are in relation to PWD, it is a challenge that centers at the local level make the determination of whether they will serve an individual (Red Cross representative said they will not serve anyone they are not medically equipped to handle and that people are not just turned away but are referred to a facility that can serve them).

4. See #3 in the first section related to Medicaid

3. List and describe in narrative at least three “next step” action items identified during the session.

1. Red Cross needs to conduct training on how to serve PWD in an emergency response. Red Cross representative mentioned that they have started doing this....

2. Red Cross needs to build partnerships and work with other organizations and faith-based organizations to help shelter evacuees and recognize that the Red Cross cannot do it all

3. Red Cross should educate their staff/management on policies related to serving PWD so policies are consistent across the local and national level, across centers, and across staff. Red Cross representative mentioned that they have started doing this....

4. Local/State organizations and government should develop Memos of Understanding in how to serve PWD and elderly in ERP

4. Report on other important issues that were discussed during Working Group.

- **International Red Cross shares information with evacuees it serves—why does the American Red Cross share such information with state and local governments who are also serving evacuees**
- **A representative from the Red Cross answered some of the groups' questions and provided Red Cross email addresses for the group to contact with further questions.**