



COUNCIL

John J. Whelan
Chairman

Christine Fizzano Cannon
Vice-Chairman

Thomas J. McGarrigle
Andy Lewis
Mario Civera, Jr.

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
12/06/10
Contact: Trish Coffell
Communications Officer
610-891-4943

**County Council Announces Outreach
To Assist People During ‘Code Blue’ Conditions**

Now that temperatures are dipping into the 30s, and winter’s official arrival is just two weeks away, County Council announced that various County agencies stand ready to offer additional supports to the homeless and vulnerable residents when “Code Blue” conditions take place.

A “Code Blue” declaration is made when the combination of air temperature and wind chill is anticipated to be 20 degrees or less and conditions pose a threat to individuals, especially those who are homeless or medically fragile.

The Delaware County Office of Adult Services partners with various agencies to offer additional services through the Homeless Services Coalition of Delaware County.

County Council member Thomas McGarrigle, Council’s liaison to the Human Services Department, detailed the expanded services that are put into place during harsh weather conditions.

“We want our residents to be aware of the supports that are in place to provide safety and shelter, especially during freezing cold weather conditions,” Councilman McGarrigle said. “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. 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 Office of Adult Services, based in Upper Darby, participates in the leadership of the Homeless Services Coalition, a group of 90 individuals and organizations dedicated to assisting the homeless. When temperatures dip below freezing, 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)

Both programs offer overnight shelter at host churches and provide transportation from pick-up points at the Salvation Army in Chester and the 69th Street Terminal in Upper Darby. Both also provide additional street outreach during the day, and the Salvation Army's Stepping Stone Day Center is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Connect-By-Night is a program offered through Connect, an agency of the Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania, which helps homeless people find and use services to become more self-sufficient.

In Upper Darby, homeless adults can find shelter at the Life Center of Eastern Delaware County. They normally have beds for 49 people, but will set up extra cots to house people when it's below freezing. The Life Center staff estimates they shelter 10 additional people each evening during cold-weather months. Homeless families with children can be referred to the Community Action Agency, which offers emergency shelter programs and other assistance.

Pat Ingham, administrator for the Office of Adult Services, 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 700 homeless people in Delaware County.

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.

For people who are not homeless, but may encounter cold-weather difficulty if they can't afford to pay their heating bill, there are other resources, including the Community Action Agency, which has a utility assistance program. The Community Action Agency is the county's official anti-poverty agency assisting economically disadvantaged county residents.

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.

"With a cold winter ahead of us, we want to ensure the health and safety of all of our residents," said Councilman McGarrigle. "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 Pat Ingham or Chris Seibert at (610) 713-2115.

Resources include:

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

Connect: 133-135 Long Lane, Upper Darby. Call 610-352-1590.

Community Action Agency. Call 610-874-8451.

Winter safety tips from the Centers for Disease Control at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/>



SHELTER FROM THE COLD

Delaware County Council announced that extra supports and services are put into place to assist homeless and vulnerable residents when “Code Blue” conditions take place during the winter months. Detailing the supports are Pat Ingham, administrator for the county Office of Adult Services, County Councilman Tom McGarrigle, (displaying the resource guides available to residents, police and municipal officials), and Louis Colbert, director of the County Office of Services for the Aging (COSA). For a copy of the Resource Guide, contact Ms. Ingham at (610) 713-2115.