



STATE OF DELAWARE  
DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY  
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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Delaware Launches First Statewide Registry to Help Citizens with Special Needs During an Emergency**

**Dover** – Today Gov. Jack A. Markell and Safety and Homeland Security (DSHS) Secretary Lewis D. Schiliro launched the nation's first statewide online registry designed to help Delaware citizens with special needs prepare for an emergency before it happens.

"This registry gives emergency responders access to vital information when time is of the essence," said Governor Markell. "It helps us help others when an emergency or unexpected medical event occurs. We hope Delawareans with special medical needs, older or younger, and their families will take advantage of this new tool. It could save a life."

The Emergency Preparedness Voluntary Registry is linked to a secure database which ties into the State's 911 system making this valuable information immediately accessible to 911 dispatchers. With this registry, 911 dispatchers will now be able to provide first responders with specific details about a citizen's special needs before they arrive on the scene.

"Having this kind of detailed information before our paramedics, firefighters or police arrive at a home is invaluable. The development of this special needs registry is about saving lives and being able to better serve our citizens," said Schiliro, who is also Chair of the State's E911 Board.

The State's Emergency Preparedness Registry was designed to help Delawareans share information on a number of specific health-related conditions or special needs. Participants are encouraged to share information on residents who may be impacted by epilepsy, cardiac conditions, Alzheimers or autism. Citizens can also share information on those who are hard of hearing or may have impaired vision or speech. In addition, they can provide specific details to help responders locate someone within the home who may be confined to a bed or unable to move without assistance.

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“If first responders need to evacuate a home or building, information from the registry will be used to let them know if someone inside may be in a wheelchair or oxygen dependent. Arming our first responders with this kind of specific information will make their jobs easier and help them become more efficient,” State 911 Administrator Terry Whitham said.

In addition to assisting first responders, local and state emergency planners will use the information gathered from this site to plan for local and state emergencies. The ability to plan ahead will help emergency personnel better serve the community at times of crisis such as snow, floods, fire, tornadoes, or events that involve terrorism.

The creation of the special needs registry has been a multi-agency effort with DSHS, Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Technology and Information, Delaware Emergency Management Agency and the Developmental Disabilities Council working together on the development and implementation of the registry. Many other state and private agencies were part of the committee that started discussions on this project more than two years.

“A major portion of the mission of the Department of Health and Social Services is protecting our vulnerable populations,” said Henry Smith, Deputy Secretary of the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services. “The creation of this registry is a clear example of how not only DHSS, but the entire state of Delaware, takes care of its own.”

This is a great example of how technology can be leveraged for the greater good. This registry is a beneficial tool for the disability community, 911 Center Operators, and First Responders to help protect lives in the event of any type of an emergency. The Department of Technology & Information is pleased that the site is easy to use and the information is properly safe guarded,” said James Sills, Secretary of the Department of Technology and Information.

The development and implementation of the registry project was approximately \$35,000 and was funded by the State’s E-911 Board and a federal emergency grant.

For more information or to begin using the State’s Emergency Preparedness Registry, go to <http://www.de911assist.delaware.gov/>

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