

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN MANATEE COUNTY



Contact:
DOH-Manatee
Communications

PROTECTING, PROMOTING, AND IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF ALL PEOPLE IN FLORIDA



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October-December 2024

IN THE FIELD Environmental Public Health Update

DOH-Manatee staff members serve meals at the special needs shelter. From left: Adriana Cavada, Hannah Sanborn, Melissa Rosenburg-Ehrmann, and Kayla Wilson.



Emergency Response: Storm Duty

The Florida Department of Health in Manatee County (DOH-Manatee) encourages you to prepare for any disaster, be it natural or manmade. Our best defense against disasters is to have a well-informed and prepared public.

When disaster strikes, DOH-Manatee staff members put aside their daily duties to help see the community through hurricanes, tropical storms, and other events.

One of the DOH-Manatee's primary duties during emergencies is to set up and maintain operations at a shelter for Manatee residents with special medical needs. Duties include unpacking hundreds of cots, preparing and serving meals, engaging community partners for supplies and support, and tending to the round-the-clock needs of clients who are oftentimes oxygen-dependent or wheelchair-bound.

Continued on reverse



Environmental Public Health Specialist Sean Sparks stacks well water sample bottles at the Myakka Community Center.

Well Water Safety

The 2024 hurricane season has been one of the wettest on record, with torrential downpours from Tropical Storm Debby, hurricanes Helene and Milton bringing record flooding to large areas of Manatee County. Rising storm waters and the debris they carry threaten, among other things, the water that private well owners use for drinking, cooking, and bathing. Environmental public health specialists from DOH-Manatee have developed a well water testing protocol to help protect the health and safety of private well owners. DOH-Manatee strike teams provide the sample bottles and instructions that private well owners need to sample and disinfect wells. Staff transports samples to the lab and provides residents with test results, retesting, and education, all at no cost.

Emergency Response: Storm Duty



DOH-Manatee nurses and Manatee EMS paramedics offer first aid services on the Health Coach.

In the wake of a disaster, DOH-Manatee staff share recovery information and work with community members in their efforts to maintain the Department's mission of protecting, promoting, and improving public health. In the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, DOH-Manatee staff members drove the Health Coach mobile unit out to Anna Maria Island. As part of recovery efforts shared with Manatee County Government and public safety/EMS, staff offered immunizations to those at risk of contracting tetanus from puncture wounds and cuts while engaged in cleanup efforts. They also administered first aid to residents and workers struggling to clear piles of sand and debris that flooding from epic storm surges had washed through homes and businesses and over roads. For more information on how to prepare for disasters, visit: FloridaHealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/prepare-yourself

Whether you're retired or in active practice, we need your skills!

The **Manasota Medical Reserve Corps** needs volunteers with medical and public health backgrounds. Join the professionals who make up your reserve corps **now** and contribute your valuable skills when and where they are needed the most. Upon verification of credentials and in exchange for your skills and expertise, we provide specialized training, education about local emergency procedures, post-response activities, and recognition. For more information, call 941-748-0747.

Sharps Containers

DOH-Manatee offers two locations for public disposal of used syringe needles, lancets, and other "sharps."

The Sharps Disposal Program is not a needle exchange program, but for disposal only at no cost and in confidence.

If you need to dispose of sharps, place them into a hard plastic or metal container with a screw-on, snap-on or other tight-fitting lid and secure the lid with heavy tape. **Return to DOH-Manatee and we will offer anyone who delivers sharps to personnel at either location a brand-new, bright orange sharps container, at no cost.**

Sharps containers are collected during regular business hours only. For safety and security, members of the public are asked not to leave sharps containers outside doors and buildings after regular business hours.

Bradenton locations include:

- Environmental Public Health Division, 410 Sixth Ave. E.
- Manatee South Center, 7880 Westmoreland Dr. (US41 and Westmoreland)

For more information, call 941-748-0747.



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Manatee.FloridaHealth.gov