Hurricane Irene Spurs Emergency Home Medical Services for Patients

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 2, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- From the Carolinas to New England, many providers of durable medical equipment and services spent the past week preparing their customers for and responding to the havoc created by Hurricane Irene. Of particular concern to homecare providers are power outages, which can be deadly for people who require a ventilator [1] for breathing or a concentrator to generate oxygen to treat COPD and other lung diseases or chronic heart failure.

Millions of Americans nationwide need types of home medical equipment [2] that require electricity, such as oxygen concentrators, ventilators, and nebulizers. During a power outage or evacuation, having an adequate back-up supply of oxygen or battery power is essential to the health of the device users, many of whom are Medicare beneficiaries.

"Providers of durable medical equipment are among the first of the first responders in natural disasters, power outages, and other emergencies that hit the frailest among us the hardest," said Tyler J. Wilson, president of the American Association for Homecare [3], that national association that represents providers of home medical equipment and services. "Ensuring safety and independence for people who require medical equipment and services at home prevents hospitalizations and ER trips, which also helps to control healthcare costs."

Several snapshots of activity during the past week follow:

Homecare Concepts in Farmingdale, New York has been delivering oxygen to patients who have lost power. The company itself lost power and employees have been coordinating care and service via cell phone to the more than 100 oxygen patients without
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SOURCE [5]

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http://www.mdtmag.com/news/2011/09/hurricane-irene-spurs-emergency-home-medical-services-patients

Links:
[1] http://www.ventusers.org/edu/vabout1.html
[2] http://www.aahomecare.org/athome

[3] http://www.aahomecare.org/
[4] http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/44349201/ns/today-today_health/t/hurricane-power-outages-endanger-those-home-medical-machines/
[5] http://www.bio-medicine.org/medicine-technology-1/Hurricane-Irene-Spurs-Emergency-Home-Medical-Services-for-Patients-19976-1/