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**WCCHS PARTICIPATES IN REGIONAL EVACUATION DRILL FOR EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS IN WESTERN NEW YORK**

Warsaw, NY, Wednesday, April 6, 2011 – Wyoming County Community Health System (WCCHS) conducted an evacuation drill in conjunction with New York State Department of Health’s Regional Partnership Drill. Twenty-six hospitals in Western New York simultaneously conducted internal drill testing for either evacuation or disaster triage.

WCCHS evacuated 12 “patients” consisting of nursing students, who volunteered for the roles from both the Skilled Nursing Facility and Hospital.

Volunteer “patients” were evacuated from their rooms to pre-defined evacuation staging areas within the facility. These staging areas are set up to handle critical, non-critical, ambulatory, and non-ambulatory patients. During a real emergency, staging areas can be set up at the facility or off site at a nearby location. The most critical patients would be transferred to a nearby facility.

Evaluators critiqued staff’s ability to gather and relocate patients, gather necessary documentation and medications, and move patients to their assigned evacuation staging areas. Color-coded bands are secured to patients’ wrists to categorize their level of acuity or ability to move on their own.

WCCHS and County personnel were in contact with NYSDOH and all other hospitals in Western New York throughout the drill and utilized satellite phones, emails, and portable radios to coordinate communications during evacuation.

Every department is activated during a drill from administration and nursing to facilities management and housekeeping, all of which comprise a “command center” to organize the evacuation and patient care. The roles of coordinators are narrowly defined in order to keep the system organized and the evacuation safe for patients and employees. Evaluations of the drill will be reviewed and the recommendations will be used to help better prepare WCCHS staff to handle a hospital emergency, such as an evacuation.

Assisting WCCHS personnel was the New York State Department of Health, Wyoming County Health Department and Wyoming County Office of Emergency Management

Questions about the drill may be directed to Brian Meyers, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for Wyoming County at bmeyers@wyomingco.net or 585-786-8890 Office, 585-322-6222 Cell.

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