Health Advisory

Key Message for Healthcare Providers: Preventing Heat-Related Illness and Death Among People Most at Risk during Excessive Heat Events

- **Identify people at increased risk for heat-related illness (see checklist on right)**

- **Remind patients that all hot weather, particularly heat waves, can be dangerous and instruct them to use air conditioning**

- **Encourage people to pay attention to official announcements about places where they can go to get relief from the heat**

- **Refer people without air conditioning to NJ 2-1-1 for information regarding Cooling Centers: www.nj211.org/nj-cooling-centers**

- **Please be aware that emergency activations and resources opened in response to extreme heat or storm events change as quickly as the weather. In addition to the link above, you can also refer to your county's Office of Emergency Management web page for information.**

- **Instruct patients and their caregivers to stay cool and well-hydrated**

> **People experiencing homelessness can dial 2-1-1 or 877-652-1148 (If you are using a rotary dial phone, please dial 1-877-746-5211)**

Identifying Patients at Risk for Heat-Related Illness and Death

People who do not have or use air conditioning **and** have one or more of these risk factors:

☐ Chronic health conditions including:
  ☐ Cardiovascular, respiratory, or renal disease
  ☐ Obesity (BMI > 30)
  ☐ Diabetes
  ☐ Serious mental illness such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder
  ☐ Cognitive or developmental disorder that impairs judgment or self-care, such as dementia

☐ Have difficulty thermoregulating or use medications that can impair thermoregulation, including:
  ☐ Diuretics
  ☐ Anticholinergics
  ☐ Antipsychotics

☐ Substance use disorder or excessive alcohol consumption

☐ Socially isolated or with limited mobility

Additional guidance for people at greater risk to heat-related illness or death

- Remind patients that heat events (heatwaves) are not just uncomfortable but can be dangerous and should seek immediate medical attention if they are experiencing signs of heat stroke or are experiencing symptoms of heat exhaustion that do not improve within one hour. The table below details the warning signs of heat stroke and heat exhaustion:

Heat Stroke	Heat Exhaustion
Very high body temperature	Heavy sweating
Red, hot, dry skin (no sweating)	Headache
Rapid, strong pulse	Weakness
Headache	Fatigue
Dizziness	Dizziness
Nausea	Nausea or vomiting
Confusion, loss of consciousness	Muscle cramps

- Discuss with people and their caregivers about the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness or risk of exacerbating chronic medical conditions associated with excessive heat and provide guidance about when to call 911 or go to the emergency department. Patients experiencing symptoms of heat stroke should call 911. Patients who are vomiting or experiencing symptoms of heat exhaustion that do not improve within 1 hour should seek immediate medical attention.

- Engage caregivers and other support networks to frequently call or otherwise remotely check on heat-vulnerable people to help them stay cool and well-hydrated before and during hot weather. Remind them that all hot weather – including but not limited to heatwaves – can be dangerous and help them develop a plan to stay cool.

- Encourage them to monitor weather alerts and make sure they have a plan for cooling relief during extreme heat.

- Encourage people to use their air conditioners. Suggest setting air conditioners to 78 degrees or "low" cool to provide comfort, save on electricity costs, and conserve energy.

- Let people know that NJ will share a list of available cooling spaces prior to and during a heatwave. Also, people can call 2-1-1 or go to www.nj211.org/nj-cooling-centers to find a cooling center in New Jersey.

- Advise people to increase fluid intake during hot weather.

- Recommend self-monitoring of hydration, such as body weight measurement, for patients who have health conditions sensitive to fluid balance or use medications that can impair thermoregulation or cause dehydration.