



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake

Mayor,

Baltimore City

250 City Hall · Baltimore Maryland 21202 · 410-396-3835 · Fax: 410-576-9425

Better Schools. Safer Streets. Stronger Neighborhoods.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 27, 2011

CONTACT

Ryan O'Doherty

(410) 818-4269

ryan.odoherty@baltimorecity.gov

Baltimore City Launches 2011 Code Red Heat Alert Plan

BALTIMORE, MD. (May 27, 2011) – Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake joined city agency leaders to announce the 2011 Code Red Heat Alert initiative, a multi-agency, coordinated approach to providing cooling relief to vulnerable populations in Baltimore City during a heat crisis.

“The Code Red Heat Alert initiative is a terrific example of government working smarter and more efficiently together with our community partners to minimize the risk of serious illness or injury and keep residents healthy,” said Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. “I encourage everyone to keep tabs on their elderly and medically fragile neighbors, especially those who live alone and are most at risk when the summer temperatures soar.”

Last summer, one of the hottest on record, 919 patients entered city emergency departments specifically complaining about heat-related illnesses. Nearly one-third of patients were 65 years or older and most patients were admitted. Baltimore City recorded 9 hyperthermia-related deaths.

“The actual numbers of heat-related hospitalizations and deaths are likely much higher as many people who seek medical help do not report the heat as the chief complaint,” said Commissioner of Health Dr. Oxiris Barbot. “Heat waves can be silent killers especially affecting those with limited economic means or with significant chronic illness.”

During heat waves, there is the potential for increased mortality from cardiovascular disease, respiratory illness and stroke. Published research shows the greatest risk of death is for individuals without air conditioning or a strong social network. Those without electricity may be particularly vulnerable to heat-related health problems.

“It’s important to get the word out now so people can start preparing for the extreme heat summer brings,” said Office of Emergency Management Director Robert Maloney. “If you must be outdoors in the extreme heat, drink plenty of water, dress appropriately and take frequent breaks.”

The Baltimore City health commissioner is responsible for declaring a Code Red Heat Alert. A press release announcing Code Red Heat Alert is sent to local media, city agencies and private sector partners. The public has several other ways to find out if a Code Red Heat Alert is in effect:

- Call 311 – the city service line
- Check the Health Department Website: www.baltimorehealth.org/coderedinfo.html.
- Facebook (@BaltimoreHealth) and Twitter (@BMore_Healthy) users can get real-time notifications and updates by following the Health Department

On Code Red Heat Alert days, Baltimore City will open emergency cooling centers. Each center will have cool air and free water available. For the latest center information, call 311.

The Community Action Program will operate five centers around the city. These centers will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays:

- Northern Community Action Center -- 5225 York Road
- Southern Community Action Center -- 606 Cherry Hill Road (inside the shopping center 2nd floor)
- Northwest Community Action Center -- 3939 Reisterstown Road
- Southeastern Community Action Center -- 3411 Bank Street
- Eastern Community Action Center – 1400 E. Federal Street

The Health Department’s Office of Aging & CARE Services will operate five additional cooling centers. These centers will be open to all on weekdays only from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.:

- Waxter Center -- 1000 Cathedral Street
- Oliver Center -- 1700 Gay Street
- Sandtown-Winchester Center -- 1601 Baker Street
- Hatton Center -- 2825 Fait Avenue
- John Booth -- 229 1/2 S. Eaton Street
- Zeta Center -- 4501 Reisterstown Road

“Residents who are concerned about a neighbor should call 311. Call 911 if you are having a heat-related emergency,” said Baltimore City Fire Chief James Clack.

City residents who want information on the closest cooling center can call 311, the city service line. Any city resident experiencing the signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke should call 911.

For more information, please visit the Health Department’s Code Red website at www.baltimorehealth.org/coderedinfo.

###

Visit our Website @ www.baltimorecity.gov