

ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Interactive Workshop Prepares Residents for Disaster

Oneida County residents will have the opportunity to learn how to prepare for an emergency and plan for disasters at the Oneida County Health Department's *Emergency Preparedness Community Workshop* scheduled for Tuesday, **November 19th from 3-7:30 pm** at the **Ava Dorfman Senior Center** in **Rome**, County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. announced today. The program is being co-sponsored by Excellus BlueCross BlueShield.

"The events of last summer brought home the reality that Oneida County residents must be prepared to protect their lives and property in the face of a natural disaster," Picente said. He continued, *"Every household in Oneida County should have an emergency supply kit, a well rehearsed disaster plan and be well informed about impending threats and how to best respond to them."*

The 20-minute workshops will be conducted and will have participants visit a series of stations to learn about various disaster risks and what to do in special circumstances such as having children, family members with special needs or pets. Those providing support materials at the stations will assist participants in building a *free* family emergency preparedness kit. The kits are limited to one per household and will include a hand-crank weather radio, first-aid kit, water storage container, waterproof document holder, Family Preparedness USB flash drive, and children's books while supplies last. One person per household can register for the workshop by going to the Oneida County web site at www.ocgov.net. The first 300 households that register for the workshop will be guaranteed a starter emergency kit. Light refreshments will be available.

"Each of us has a responsibility to ourselves and our loved ones to be prepared should disaster strike or an emergency occur," Phyllis Ellis, Oneida County Director of Health said. She added, *"The Oneida County Health Department is pleased to join with Excellus BlueCross BlueShield to provide this informative workshop that will better equip us to meet our responsibility."*

Support materials will be provided by the Salvation Army, Utica and Poland Libraries and members of Herkimer-Oneida Organizations Active in Disasters (HOOAD).