From: Williams, Edwina (VDSS) <edwina.williams@dss.virginia.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2026 9:38 AM
To: DSS_LICENSING@LISTSERV.COV.VIRGINIA.GOV <DSS_LICENSING@LISTSERV.COV.VIRGINIA.GOV>
Subject: Winter Storm Fern – Situational Awareness and Emergency Preparedness

The attached file is being sent to assisted living facilities, adult day centers and children's residential facilities from the Virginia Department of Social Services Email Distribution Service.

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VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

People Helping People

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COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

DATE: January 22, 2026

TO: Assisted Living Facilities
Adult Day Centers
Children's Residential Facilities

FROM: Tara Ragland, Director
Division of Licensing Programs

RE: Winter Storm Fern - Situational Awareness and Emergency Preparedness

The National Weather Service is predicting a major and potentially historic winter storm impacting Virginia this weekend. The forecast shows the potential for heavy snowfall, wintry mix, freezing rain and bitter cold temperatures. Impacts of the storm may bring hazardous travel conditions, power outages, and service disruptions, potentially lasting multiple days. Providers should take proactive steps now to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of individuals in care.

All licensed providers should review and, if necessary, implement their emergency preparedness and response plans in accordance with the applicable regulation requirements for their program type:

- **Assisted Living Facilities:** 22VAC40-73-950
- **Adult Day Centers:** 22VAC40-61-520
- **Children's Residential Facilities:** 22VAC40-151-990

Winter Storm Fern Briefing

The Virginia Healthcare Emergency Management Program (VHEMP) - a partnership between the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA) and the four Regional Healthcare Coalitions is hosting a **winter weather briefing on Thursday, January 22, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.** featuring Katie Carter, Emergency Response Specialist with the National Weather Service (NWS). The briefing will focus on the potential winter weather forecasted to impact the Commonwealth between January 23 and January 25, 2026. Panelists will discuss considerations and recommendations related to transportation, infrastructure, supply chain, and personal safety. Registration is required for this webinar.

As an additional resource, the NWS will provide updated briefings on this storm each day at 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. You can also stay informed on the latest storm updates, its projected path and timing of the storm for your specific area, by visiting the National Weather Service website and entering your zip code in the upper left-hand corner of the screen.

Winter Storm Preparedness Checklist

Providers should ensure the following actions have been completed or are in progress:

- Emergency preparedness plan has been reviewed and is current
- Staff are aware of emergency roles, reporting expectations, and backup coverage plans
- Contingency plans are in place for limited or no staff travel for multiple days
- Adequate food and water supplies are available as required by your program type
- Sufficient medications, medical supplies, and essential health-related items are on hand
- Emergency supplies are available that do not require electricity or cooking
- Emergency contact lists and individual records are accessible in the event of power or internet outages
- Plans are in place to address potential loss of power, heat, water, or communications

In the event of a weather-related emergency at your facility, you may contact your regional Healthcare Coalition representative for assistance. You may find your regional representative's contact information and other helpful information by visiting their website.

Once conditions are stabilized, providers must notify their assigned Licensing Inspector and ensure appropriate communication with family members or legal representatives regarding the emergency event and the status of individuals in care.

The Division of Licensing Programs recognizes the critical role you play in maintaining continuity of care during emergency situations. Thank you for your continued commitment to safeguarding individuals in care and for taking appropriate steps to prepare ahead of this storm.