

Keeping cool in Florida assisted living communities: Barriers to power rule implementation



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

A PREEMINENT RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

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Introduction

- An emergency power rule for nursing homes and assisted living communities (ALCs) was enacted in 2018 after 13 heat-related deaths in a nursing home affected by Hurricane Irma.
- It required an alternative power source to keep ambient air temperatures below 81 degrees and had to be implemented by January 1, 2019.
- Structural characteristics of ALCs may affect the implementation of emergency plans, endangering vulnerable older adults.

Objectives

- To determine the structural characteristics associated with ALCs that implemented an emergency power plan by January 1, 2019.
- To understand challenges to implement the emergency power plan.

Mixed Methods

Quantitative Data and Sample

- Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) data on facility characteristics and emergency power plan implementation date.
- 2,940 ALCs in Florida operating on January 1, 2019

Qualitative Data and Sample

- Interviews of ALC administrators between May 2018 and May 2019.
- 29 interviewed administrators for 32 ALCs.

Analysis

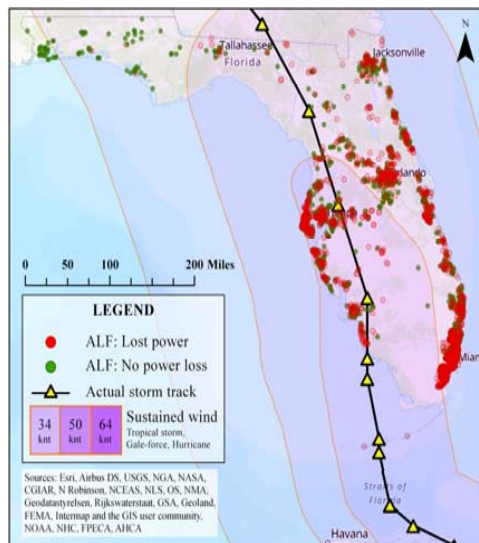
Logistic Regression

- Main Outcome – emergency power plan implemented by January 1, 2019
- Facility characteristics (size, license type, Medicaid acceptance, Optional State Supplementation (OSS) beds, profit status, rural area, Memory care)

Content analysis

- Analysis of interview data using Atlas.ti 8. Codes included generator rule, cost issues, benefits of rule, process issues, and coordination with state and local governments.

Figure 1. Power loss of Florida Assisted Living Communities after Hurricane Irma (N=3,112)



Qualitative Themes

Financial Burden

Small, ECC/LNS license, Accepts Medicaid	Large, LMH license, Accepts Medicaid
"I'm only a 13-bed facility. It's a harder hardship for small ones"	"It's a lot of cost because you have to buy the generator... You have to pay the city... it's a lot of money."

Coordination with Governments

Small, Standard license	Large, ECC/LNS license
"I just felt like everything was just so disorganized. Like the county was saying one thing, AHCA was saying something else."	"there might be some issues related to what the AHCA requirement are versus the city and I think there might be some confusion there."

Time Constraints

Small, LMH license	Large, ECC/LNS license, Accepts Medicaid
"we had a time limit. And everybody was running to get it, has to meet the deadline"	"Oh, it was crazy. I mean, they gave you like three months. It was just totally; it wasn't going to work"

Merits of Rule

Small, ECC/LNS license, Accepts Medicaid	Large, ECC/LNS license
"I think we're going to be probably a lot, lot better because the main thing that really affects us is the power."	"I agree with the heart of the rule and the thoughts behind it."

Quantitative Results

Regression of Florida ALCs by Emergency Power Plan Implementation (N = 2,940)

ALC Characteristics	Implemented (n = 2,219)	Not Implemented (n = 721)	Beta	p-value
Small (≤ 16 beds)	1,584 (71.4)	322 (44.7)	0.968	<.001***
License Type				
Standard only	1,189 (53.6)	364 (50.5)		
ECC/LNS	422 (19.0)	252 (35.0)	-0.261	.020*
LMH	608 (27.4)	105 (14.6)	0.342	.017*
Accepts Medicaid	998 (45.0)	271 (37.6)	0.083	.385
Has at least 1 OSS bed	947 (42.7)	185 (25.7)	0.263	.032*
For-Profit	2,077 (93.6)	680 (94.3)	-0.604	.002**
Rural Area	51 (2.3)	13 (1.8)	0.427	.192
Memory Care	336 (15.1)	184 (25.5)	0.016	.890

Note. All variables except for-profit and rural area significantly different ($p < .05$) for plan implementation by Chi-Square tests. p -values for logistic regression results. ECC = Extended Congregate Care, LNS = Limited Nursing Services, LMH = Limited Mental Health, OSS = Optional State Supplementation
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Policy Implications

- Power outages are a frequent occurrence in multiple types of emergencies, i.e. fires, hurricanes, and blizzards.
- Florida is a model for alternative power legislation to protect vulnerable older adults residing in long-term care.
- Implementation of new regulations requires time and regulators need to allow reasonable extensions.
- Strong gubernatorial and executive regulatory agency support is needed to help ALCs resolve conflicts with local zoning and fire marshal rules that impede power rule implementation.
- State needs to provide financial relief to ALCs through sales tax exemption and reduced corporate taxes to ensure compliance.
- Requiring public reporting of ALC plan implementation increases consumers' knowledge about ALC rule and heightens informed choice.

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