

****STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER****

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS**

Immediate Release
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**Statement from DOH and DOEA Secretaries on the Closing of all Florida
Special Needs Shelters Following Hurricane Dennis**

Dr. John Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A., M.P.H., Secretary, Florida Department of Health:

"Through the diligence and care of the volunteers at the special needs shelters, we are pleased to say that our last special needs clients left the Santa Rosa shelter today. Dedicated doctors, nurses and health workers have been in place caring for those residents with special needs who turn to the Department of Health and our partner agencies for care during an emergency.

"I am humbled by these health care workers, who leave their own families in order to help those residents with special health care needs. I applaud these volunteers and thank them for their continued service. During each potential threat to their communities, they continue to be the first to rush forward to take care of their fellow residents. I have no doubt that will always be the case. From their hearts, they ensure comfort, security and well-being to these residents in their greatest time of need."

Secretary Carole Green, Department of Elder Affairs, added:

"As Secretary of the Department of Elder Affairs, I commend the dedicated individuals for the speed and efficiency they displayed in the closing of special needs shelters. I applaud caregivers who registered their loved ones with special needs shelters. Additionally, staff in the areas affected by Hurricane Dennis worked diligently, and will continue to work, at assisting clients in returning to their place of residence where they feel most familiar.

"I am especially proud of the department's CARES (Comprehensive Assessment and Review for Long-Term Care Services) and Long-Term Care Ombudsman staff for making certain that those individuals returned to a safe environment."

Florida Emergency Information Line: 1-800-342-3557.

Public Information Emergency Support Function: 850-921-0384.

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