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Most Nursing Homes Throughout the United States Do Not Have Adequate or Reliable Emergency Power Systems

Why OIG Did This Audit

- During Hurricane Ida, seven nursing home residents in Louisiana died in unsafe and unsanitary conditions after nursing homes evacuated residents into an overcrowded warehouse after reports of massive power outages throughout the State. During Winter Storm Uri, 118 nursing homes in Texas lost power and residents from many of the nursing homes had to be evacuated.
- This audit assessed the reliability and adequacy of emergency power systems in nursing homes throughout the United States that participate in the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

What OIG Found

- We identified emergency power system deficiencies at 72 of the 100 sampled nursing homes that we audited. These 72 nursing homes had a total of 119 deficiencies. These deficiencies occurred because of inadequate nursing home resources and frequent management and staff turnover.

72 of 100 audited nursing homes had unreliable and/or inadequate emergency power systems.

Generator Deficiencies	Number of Nursing Homes
Inadequate Maintenance	53
Inadequate Circuit Coverage	38
Out of Date (Aged ≥ 40 Years)	10

Note: The total number of nursing homes exceeds 72 because we identified multiple maintenance deficiencies at several nursing homes.

- On the basis of our sample results, we estimated that for the 15,115 nursing homes throughout the United States, 10,983 (73 percent) nursing homes have inadequate or unreliable emergency power systems. Specifically, we estimated that 7,967 (53 percent) nursing homes have inadequate generator maintenance, 5,869 (39 percent) nursing homes have generators with inadequate circuit coverage, and 1,447 (10 percent) nursing homes have generators 40 years of age or older.
- As a result of the identified deficiencies, residents, staff, and visitors at these nursing homes are at an increased risk of injury or death during a power failure.

What OIG Recommends

We recommend that [CMS](#) share the results of this report with nursing homes and emphasize the importance of having adequate and reliable emergency power systems.

CMS concurred with our recommendation.