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State should investigate how power outages affected Michiganders using at-home medical devices

LANSING – State officials must examine how many residents who lost power because of recent storms also lost access to their essential medical devices, the executive director of the **Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) – Michigan Chapter** said today.

[Nearly 100,000 Michiganders](#) receiving Medicare rely on electricity to power devices like ventilators, nebulizers, CPAP machines or to refrigerate medication like insulin. That number is likely higher when factoring in residents using those devices who are on private insurance or have other coverage, said **Kathleen Slonager**, RN, AE-C, CCH, executive director of **AAFA – Michigan Chapter**.

“We know approximately 800,000 Michigan residents lost power because of the strong storms and that DTE and Consumers Energy took far too long to turn the lights back on,” Slonager said. “What we don’t know is how many of those people rely on at-home medical devices that require electricity and how many people’s health was compromised because of extended outages. Unfortunately, extreme storms are growing ever more common in our state because of climate change. We must ensure the utilities are held fully accountability for this outage and use that information to make improvements to our electric service so residents who depend on ventilators, CPAP machines and other medical devices aren’t left hurting when the power goes out.”

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