This document provides a brief summary of the information presented in the first responder training video relating to those members of our community who have a chronic illness.

**Understanding individuals with chronic illnesses:**

- Chronic illness may include heart disease, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, epilepsy, emphysema, and asthma.
- During an emergency, disease symptoms could be triggered by poor air quality and heightened levels of excitement, nervousness, and anxiety.

**Visual cues to look for:**

- An individual who is experiencing symptoms related to a chronic illness may simply look ill. They may also be shaking or look concerned and/or scared.
- When they speak, they may not make sense or may seem confused.

**Specific sensitives to be aware of with individuals with chronic illness:**

- A diabetic's blood sugar level could go up rapidly with adrenaline associated with excitement, nervousness, and anxiety. Be sure the person is able to test their blood sugar level.
- For respiratory diseases, individuals may require a rescue inhaler, nebulizer, CPAP machine, or other medical device that should be kept with them.
- Some individuals may have medical devices such as colostomy bags or urinary catheters.

**Best practices for communicating with individuals who have chronic illness:**

- Speak slowly and in a calm fashion.
- Ask individuals what assistance they may need and what medical equipment should be brought with them to manage their disease.
- Ask if they are able to bring their medications or a list of medications and medical records. Be sure to also bring food for diabetics who may experience low blood sugar.

**Special thanks to the following organizations for participating in this video:**

County of San Diego Emergency Medical Services  
San Diego Fire—Rescue  
San Diego Police Department  
University of California, San Diego