§ 23-a. County registry of disabled persons; notice. 1. In each county having a local disaster preparedness plan pursuant to section twenty-three of this article, in order to meet the special needs of persons who would need assistance during evacuations and sheltering because of physical or mental handicaps, it is recommended that each chief executive maintain a registry of disabled persons located within the county. The registration shall identify those persons in need of assistance and plan for resource allocation to meet those identified needs. To assist the chief executive in identifying such persons, the county department of health, or such other county department or agency as designated by the chief executive, shall provide voluntary registration information to all of its special needs clients and to all incoming clients as part of the intake process. The registry shall be updated annually. The registration program shall give disabled persons the option of pre-authorizing emergency response personnel to enter their homes during search and rescue operations if necessary to assure their safety and welfare during disasters.

2. Upon the establishment of a voluntary registry of disabled persons as provided in subdivision one of this section, the chief executive shall make such registry available to the appropriate county, state and federal agencies for their use in delivering services in the event of a local or state disaster. The chief executive shall, upon the request of the state emergency management office, provide such registry information to such office. The chief executive may, at his discretion, use the registry information for local disaster preparedness only in coordination with other political subdivisions of the state.

3. Upon the establishment of a voluntary registry of disabled persons as provided in subdivision one of this section, at least semi-annually, each chief executive shall cause to be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the county a notice of the availability of the voluntary registration program.

4. All records, data, information, correspondence and communications relating to the registration of disabled persons as provided in subdivision one of this section are confidential, except that such

information shall be available to other county chief executives for local disaster preparedness only as the chief executive of the county maintaining such registry deems necessary. Provided, however, the individual file of a person having registered with the registry of disabled persons shall be made available to that person upon request.

5. All community-based services providers, including home health care providers, shall assist the chief executive by collecting registration information for people with special needs as part of program intake processes, establishing programs to increase the awareness of the registration process, and educating clients about the procedures that may be necessary for their safety during disasters.

6. A county shall not be liable for any claim based upon the good faith exercise or performance or the good faith failure to exercise or perform a function or duty on the part of any officer or employee in carrying out a local disaster preparedness plan.