



Disaster Networking Collaborative

Recommended Disaster Roles and Responsibilities for a Children's Hospital

Purpose: This document highlights recommendations for two critical disaster leadership roles and their related responsibilities for every children's hospital.

Children's hospitals play a vital regional role in the healthcare of children every day. In a disaster, both natural and manmade, this role is even more critical. The value of a disaster leadership team cannot be overstated and is the first step to ensuring uptake of evidence-based guidelines and a coordinated regional disaster response that meets the needs of children. Below are recommendations to help ensure the disaster leadership team is appropriately staffed, supported, and effective. While the recommendations are not prescriptive, having consistency among leadership positions and an emergency/disaster committee with pediatric representation is optimal.

For the purposes of this document, a children's hospital may be defined as a freestanding hospital or exist within a general hospital.

Team Role 1: Pediatric Disaster Medical Director

Purpose: The pediatric disaster medical director (ie. a physician with pediatric preparedness expertise) oversees disaster preparedness activities for the hospital and facilitates integration into regional emergency management groups/coalitions.

Minimum Recommended FTE: 0.1-0.3

Reporting Structure: This role might report to a representative on the emergency management committee, C-suite, or Chief Medical Officer.

Qualifications:

- Physician with clinical experience (preferably in a landscape where hospital operations and flow are understood)
- An understanding of the role and interplay of pediatric emergency care, pediatric disaster preparedness, pediatric prehospital care, pediatric hospital-based care, pediatric critical care, pediatric infectious disease, pediatric community/public health, surgical care, and mental and behavioral health
- Understanding of the regulatory environment (e.g. Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act [EMTALA])
- Comprehensive knowledge and experience working with emergency, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and disaster management groups
- Understanding of disaster operations at the hospital (e.g., Personal and Protective Equipment (PPE), staging, trained staff, incident command setup)
- Knowledge of regional hospitals/health system networks and their pediatric capabilities, including pediatric readiness, disaster preparedness and response, epidemiology, and disease reporting surveillance tools
- Participation in regional emergency management committees and coalitions
- Strong working relationship with local public health and law enforcement, including an understanding of their response capabilities and capacity

- Knowledge of local EMS agencies and scope of practice, staffing, and response capabilities
- Familiarity with the Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) Program and other national resources available in pediatric emergency and disaster preparedness and response

Training/Experience: Federal Emergency Management Agency National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) courses (minimum)

Recommended:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX)
- Radiation Emergency Assistance Center and Training Site (REACTS)
- Hospital Emergency Response Training (HERT)
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Health Emergencies in Large Populations (HELP)
- Deployable Teams, Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT), Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)
- Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP)
- Fellowship training in Emergency Management/Disaster/Disaster Medicine

Continuing Education: Participate in the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Children and Disasters (COCD), National Healthcare Coalition Preparedness Conference (NHCCPC), Preparedness Summit, and/or The National Emerging Special Pathogens Training and Education Center (NETEC)

Regional Partnerships: Collaborate with a regional Pediatric Disaster Care Center of Excellence (COE), Pediatric Pandemic Network (PPN), EMSC State Partnership Program Managers/Advisory Board, AAP state chapter/disaster champion, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program, Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP), other regional pediatric disaster coalitions, adult hospital disaster experts/centers, and/or regional medical center disaster teams.

Duties—In conjunction with emergency management/disaster management committee:

- Support the development and annual review of a Hazards Vulnerability Analysis (HVA) with consideration of pediatric vulnerabilities
- Form Subject Matter Expert groups around specialized topics (i.e., cybersecurity, Infectious Diseases [ID], radiological, mental health) and be a liaison for these consultants to the disaster leaders
- Review and amend pediatric disaster plans for your local institution
- Adopt best practices, policies, and research-informed pediatric care
- Represent pediatrics within the ICS of the hospital or healthcare system
- Maintain input from ID, Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, Emergency Department (ED), hospitalist and other subspecialist counterparts
- Implement pediatric disaster simulation and drills (i.e., be the content leader for drills but partner with others in the hospital to accomplish)

- Coordinate regional disaster drills with nearby community hospitals and partners
- Uphold personal and personnel training within the institution surrounding pediatric disaster response (e.g. decontamination, triage, surge, PPE)
- Engage in PPN disaster content regarding pediatric disaster response
- Participate in scholarly activities related to pediatric disaster preparedness and response including Quality Improvement (QI) activities, manuscript development, regional/state presentations, educational products, disaster research
- Represent the children's hospital during local/regional disaster events
- Work with Emergency Department leadership to ensure day-to-day pediatric readiness
- Work with the disaster committee to create regular and just-in-time messaging regarding disaster preparedness and response plans
- Integrate disaster response training into staff credentialing
- Engage GME trainees in training and education
- Act as co-representative for The Joint Commission (with Emergency Manager)
- Coordinate activities with the Hospital Emergency Manager or Trauma Coordinator and nursing leadership
- This role could serve as Incident Commander in the setting of a disaster

Liaison work:

- Work with Public Information Officer to form relationships and have important contacts ready
- Participate in regional emergency management committees and state disaster response forums
- Partner with other disaster leads at other hospitals within the region
- Ensure integration of disease and patient tracking methodology for surge planning
- Work with coalitions to assess capabilities of all hospitals in the area to develop a regional triage plan for accurately placing patients during a mass casualty incident



- Provide guidance to regional hospitals regarding pediatric disaster planning, pediatric transport and transfer plans, and reunification planning
- Provide education to, and seek input from, community pediatricians on pediatric disaster planning
- Advocate for pediatric disaster training and awareness
- Facilitate community partnerships to strengthen regional networks and drive educational content dissemination

Team Role 2: Pediatric Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

Purpose: Oversee operational aspects of disaster planning and response for the hospital in collaboration with the Disaster Medical Director, Disaster Preparedness Committee, and other emergency management personnel

Administrative: This position can be housed under different departments (e.g., security, operations, facility). Determine which serves as the best conduit for multi-department collaboration

Duties:

- Collaborate with the management team in the creation, development, education, training, and implementation of disaster plans that are in alignment with state and other regulatory agencies
- Conduct an annual hazard vulnerability assessment (HVA)/risk analysis to determine the facility's risk for natural (e.g., hurricanes, floods, earthquakes), technological (e.g., nuclear power plant emergencies or hazardous materials spills), human-caused (e.g., active shooter or hostage situations), and other disasters
- Develop and maintain emergency and mitigation plans and procedures for disasters identified in the HVA/ risk analysis
- Manage disaster response or crisis management activities for the facility. Facilitate planning for availability of staff 24/7 to respond to disaster or potential disaster situations
- Participate in the organization's committee for general administration in planning, coordinating, maintaining, and updating disaster plans, including internal and external event response. Provide necessary project management and support for all related emergency preparedness sub-committee work
- Oversee the development and management of the emergency preparedness budget
- Develop and prepare reports that fulfill grant contract requirements as outlined by the specific funding stream
- Perform an education and training needs assessment and work collaboratively with staff development representatives to create, implement, and review safety/regulatory education and training requirements/programs to meet the needs of staff (e.g., hospital ICS)
- Establish mechanisms to collect, review, and track data required by local, state, and federal entities which are consistent with the facility's policies and procedures.
- Represent the organization on various preparedness committees, such as the regional healthcare coalition



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