National Disaster Pediatric Initiative

What is the National Disaster Pediatric Initiative?
The National Disaster Pediatric Initiative is multi-faceted, consisting of a Funding Opportunity Announcement for two Pediatric Disaster Care Centers of Excellence pilot projects, the development of deployable pediatric specialty care capabilities within the National Disaster Medical System, and the exploration of telemedicine capabilities to provide clinical consultation for pediatric care during national disasters. The initiative seeks to increase and maintain healthcare professional competency through the development and delivery of relevant education and training, and enhance the capability of the healthcare system to deliver efficient and effective pediatric patient care during multi-jurisdictional and national disasters.

What kind of funding announcement will ASPR be publishing?
In fiscal year 2019, ASPR intends to fund two Pediatric Disaster Care Centers of Excellence pilot projects that will demonstrate how to increase and maintain healthcare professional competencies through the development and delivery of relevant education and training, and enhance the capability of the healthcare system to deliver efficient and effective pediatric patient care during multi-jurisdictional or national disasters. Specific focus will be given to the management of pediatric patients exposed to chemical, biologic, radiologic, and nuclear (CBRN) agents, pandemic influenza (PI), emerging infectious disease (EID), as well as trauma. The Pediatric Disaster Care Centers of Excellence will serve as a nationally available resource to provide technical assistance to healthcare facilities and providers with planning and coordinating the care of children in multi-jurisdictional and national disasters.

How will these two sites be chosen?
ASPR plans to issue a Funding Opportunity Announcement for this initiative. Proposals submitted will undergo a competitive review process and will be analyzed against published evaluation criteria to identify which proposals best meet the needs of the program, as well as federal technical and legal requirements.

How will the additional funding in the NDMS budget be used for the Disaster Care Centers of Excellence?
The feedback will be used to help ASPR better understand the unique healthcare needs of children during disasters. Feedback will assist with the development of the Funding Opportunity Announcement and will inform ASPR's decisions for purchasing equipment, supplies, and medication for the care of pediatric patients by NDMS personnel.

Is it necessary to submit feedback to ASPR in order to be eligible to apply for the Funding Opportunity Announcement?
No, the feedback will be used to help ASPR better understand the unique healthcare needs of children during disasters, assist with the development of the Funding Opportunity Announcement, and inform ASPR's decisions for purchasing equipment and supplies that are specifically appropriate for the pediatric population. Requirements for eligibility will be highlighted within the Funding Opportunity Announcement.
Why is ASPR focusing on pediatrics?

The U.S. population includes 81 million children, a quarter of the nation's population, and treating illnesses and injuries in children requires specific expertise, equipment, and supplies. While pediatric hospitals provide excellent care for children every day, a large-scale incident involving the release of a chemical or biological agent or a pandemic could overwhelm even the most capable systems. The National Disaster Medical System and the nation's healthcare system overall need to be ready to support impacted communities in such incidents.

How does the ASPR pediatric initiative complement ASPR's Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP), HRSA's Emergency Medical Services for Children Program, and the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS)?

The Pediatric Disaster Care Centers of Excellence will complement and work with HPP, EMSC and NDMS programs. In FY2019, HPP requires the development, maturation, and testing of pediatric capabilities through healthcare coalition pediatric response plans, including joint program measures with the HRSA Emergency Medical Services for Children Program. The HRSA EMSC Program focuses on improving pediatric care with a particular emphasis on readiness for local emergencies that involve a large number of children, such as school bus accidents and mass shootings. This new NDMS initiative takes the next step, focusing on pediatric care during multi-jurisdictional and national emergencies, particularly those involving health security threats such as CBRN incidents and pandemics.

The initiative includes the development of deployable pediatric specialty care capabilities within the National Disaster Medical System, two Pediatric Disaster Care Centers of Excellence pilot projects, and the exploration of telemedicine capabilities to provide clinical consultation for pediatric care during national disasters. For example, NDMS deployable teams currently include pediatric physicians and nurses; however, NDMS has limited equipment and supplies for the care of pediatric patients during multi-jurisdictional and national disaster responses. Further expanding the capability of ASPR and the broader healthcare system to provide pediatric disaster medical care will enhance HHS' ability to save lives.

What will be the requirements of the recipients of the pediatric initiative funding? Are these recipients going to be expected to act as a state resource, a regional resource, or a national resource?

The specific requirements for funding will be highlighted within the Funding Opportunity Announcement. The Pediatric Disaster Care Centers of Excellence are expected to provide patient care as needed within their own institution. The Pediatric Disaster Care Centers of Excellence will be expected to develop deployable assets to care for pediatric patients during disasters. Additionally, ASPR envisions the Pediatric Disaster Care Centers of Excellence combining the resources of healthcare institutions experienced in treating pediatric illness and injury to offer training, readiness consultations, and other subject matter expertise to help other facilities prepare. In this way, the Pediatric Disaster Care Centers of Excellence will serve as a nationally available resource to help other facilities and providers with planning, coordinating, and technical assistance for the care of children in multi-jurisdictional and national emergencies, such as CBRN incidents or pandemics.

In addition to pediatrics, what are ASPR’s plans for focusing on other subspecialties (e.g. burn, chemical, radiation, and trauma) in future fiscal years?

ASPR recognizes the importance of preparing the nation’s healthcare system for disasters, which includes developing readiness in pediatric and other subspecialties of care. Specific investments in the future will be contingent upon identified gaps, HHS priorities, and funding appropriations.