September is National Preparedness Month. This is the thirteenth year that Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has sponsored this preparedness outreach initiative with the overall goal to increase the number of people performing preparedness activities. Last year’s theme was very successful; therefore it is being used this year as well! “Don’t wait. Communicate. Make your emergency plan today.” This theme emphasizes preparedness for youth, older adults, and people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.

There are five weekly themes to help focus preparedness activities to different areas of the community:

Week 1: August 28th - September 3rd: Kickoff to National Preparedness Month
Week 2: September 4th-10th: Preparing Family & Friends
Week 3: September 11th-17th: Preparing Through Service
Week 4: September 18th-24th: Individual Preparedness
Week 5: September 25th-30th: Lead up to National PrepareAthon Day

For more information on FEMA’s campaign or to access their National Preparedness Month Toolkit, visit: https://www.ready.gov/september

Throughout September, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response is partnering with over 3000 organizations (national, regional, and local governments, private and public organizations) to support emergency preparedness efforts and encourage Americans to take action. Each week, they plan to release blog posts, social media messages, a Twitter chat, and graphics that focus the messaging on the following areas:

Week 1: Prepare Globally
Week 2: Prepare to Respond
Week 3: Prepare Locally
Week 4: Prepare Together
Week 5: Prepare Yourself.

For more information on CDC’s campaign or to access their National Preparedness Month resources, visit: http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/npm/index.htm
National Preparedness Month: American Academy of Pediatrics

In support of National Preparedness Month and pediatric preparedness, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has issued a call to action and encourages activities to promote pediatric emergency readiness during September. Here are a few of their suggestions that practitioners can do:

- Begin conversations with families about potential disasters in their area. Identify what each child would need to safely cope with the disaster. Resources to assist with this include: AAP Family Readiness Kit, Four Steps to Prepare Your Family for Disasters, and the Are You Ready? Preparing for Emergencies: Tips for Families handout.

- Encourage families to make a communication plan. A plan template for both parents and kids is available. Create an Emergency Contact Card for each family member, especially each child, that they keep with them when away from home.

- Keep current regarding public health emergencies

Additional ideas and other pediatric preparedness resources can be found on the AAP Children & Disasters web page at: https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Children-and-Disasters

Put Your Pediatric Expertise to Work During a Disaster

Many areas within Illinois lack pediatric experts on a daily basis. This gap will be further exacerbated during a large scale disaster. In 2014, the Pediatric and Neonatal Surge Annex (appendix to the state health and medical disaster plan) was developed in an effort to ensure all children in Illinois receive the care they need during a disaster. A component of this plan is the use of pediatric experts within Illinois to provide remote medical consultation and statewide coordination of care. A specialty team of pediatric physicians and advanced practice nurses has been developed within the state medical disaster team (IMERT). This pediatric team is not a “boots on the ground” response team but instead, has been designed to provide pediatric expertise remotely. Team members do not have to travel or leave their community.

Type of Specialists Needed:
Pediatric physicians (e.g. Emergency Medicine, Intensivists, Surgeons, Neonatologists) and Advanced Practice Nurses (Nurse Practitioners and Clinical Nurse Specialists) who specialize in pediatrics/neonates.

Role Description:
When the Pediatric Care Medical Specialist (PCMS) team is activated, pediatric expert team members would respond remotely (from their home/community) to:

- Provide medical/nursing consultation to hospitals throughout the state who need to care for children for a longer time period than normal because they are unable to transfer them to a pediatric tertiary care center due to the disaster.
- Assist with statewide triage to identify which children need to be transferred to pediatric tertiary care or specialty centers

Team Requirements:
All PCMS team members must meet the following requirements:

1) Physician/APN (NP or CNS) with an unencumbered Illinois license
2) Complete all IMERT prerequisites and training requirements
3) 2 years of experience in their pediatric specialty area

Team Member Commitment:
No call time is required for team members. Team members need to remain current with IMERT member requirements. When team is activated, members will be contacted to determine their availability for shifts ranging from 4 hours to 12 hours.

Applications are being accepted for pediatric physician and advanced practice nurse specialists who are interested in putting their expertise to work during a disaster.

For more information, questions about the role, or to begin the application process, please contact Laura Prestidge (lprestidge@luc.edu /708-327-2558).
Illinois EMS for Children (EMSC) Pediatric Preparedness Updates

Illinois EMSC develops pediatric preparedness resources, tools and education to assist those who will need to care for children during disasters. Over the last year, several new tools, and resources have been developed. In addition to new pediatric preparedness resources, EMSC has a new website (www.stritch.luc.edu/emsc)! All the resources listed below and other pediatric preparedness resources can be accessed on the new website in the Disaster Preparedness section.

This EMSC developed online educational module was updated to include additional resources/tools such as PsySTART that can help responders address the mental health needs of children during and after disasters. One hour of continuing education credit is provided upon successful completion of this module.

Recently, revisions were made to the Pediatric Disaster Triage: Utilizing the JumpSTART Method Provider and Instructor courses. Updates were made to be consistent with current practice guidelines and based on student feedback from classes conducted throughout the state.

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Coming Soon!!

Over the coming months, the following additional pediatric preparedness resources will be developed by and available through the Illinois EMSC program:

⇒ Revisions/updates to the IDPH ESF-8 Plan: Pediatric and Neonatal Surge Annex
⇒ Revised Disaster Preparedness Exercises Addressing the Pediatric Population document to include guidance for both health care and non-health care agencies/organizations for how to include children in disaster exercises and drills. This updated document has been renamed, Addressing the Needs of Children in Disaster Preparedness Exercises, to reflect the expansion of the content.
⇒ Brief (20-30 minutes) online training webinars that focus on key essential topic areas from the Hospital Pediatric Preparedness Checklist that need to be included in disaster planning in order to effectively meet the needs of children. This year’s webinars will focus on reunification, decontamination and evacuation.
⇒ The Pediatric Disaster Triage: Utilizing the JumpSTART Method trainings (provider and instructor courses) have been supported by EMSC for nearly 10 years. In order to facilitate more widespread access to the provider course throughout the state, an online JumpSTART provider course will be developed.

SEPTEMBER 2016
Illinois Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) is a collaborative program between the Illinois Department of Public Health and Loyola University Chicago, aimed at improving pediatric emergency care and disaster preparedness within our state. Since 1994, the Illinois EMSC Advisory Board and several committees along with organizations and individuals within the EMS, pediatric and emergency management communities have worked to enhance and integrate pediatric education, standards, injury prevention and data initiatives into the Illinois EMS system. The goal of Illinois EMSC is to ensure that appropriate emergency medical care is available for ill and injured children at every point along the continuum of care.