
Tennessee's Pediatric Annex to the Tennessee Emergency Management Plan & Healthcare Coalitions Pediatric Disaster Annex

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NASHVILLE, TN –Children's Emergency Care Alliance of Tennessee (CECATN), in conjunction with the Tennessee Department of Health, joined forces over the past few months to tackle writing a state-wide protocol addressing pediatrics in disasters. The previous plan had grown outdated and a lot has changed in how states prepare for a disaster event.

This journey evolved when the Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response (ASPR), a national organization, tasking every healthcare coalition in the country to write a Pediatric Disaster Annex. In Tennessee, there are 8 healthcare coalitions. To provide a unified front on this project, CECATN and the Committee on Pediatric Emergency Care (CoPEC) reached out to organizations across the state to develop a template that the healthcare coalitions could use. While organizing the template, it was determined that if we wanted to provide the best care to children in a disaster, and best utilize the resources we have across Tennessee, that the healthcare coalitions would need to align their Pediatric Disaster Annex with Tennessee's Emergency Management Plan.

Therefore, both groups joined efforts in updating the Tennessee's Pediatric Annex to the Tennessee Emergency Management Plan while providing a template that the healthcare coalitions could use when preparing their regional plans. After distributing this tool across the state, CECA and CoPEC have been traveling around aiding the healthcare coalitions in identify their assets and building communication between entities.

Children are a significant proportion of the Tennessee population. Approximately one in four of Tennessee's citizens are less than 18 years of age (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Children have unique physical, behavioral, development, and emotional responses to illness and injury that require special consideration by health care providers (Winters, 2003). It is important to understand that the delivery of healthcare to children is much different than adult care. "Children are not small adults," and these differences place children at a disproportionate risk of harm. Not only are children's medical needs unique, how they react to a disaster can be vastly different than how an adult perceives and reacts in an emergency.

Both the state plan and the coalition plans cover topics such as: concept of operations, roles and responsibilities, behavioral health needs, triage and treatment, transportation, patient tracking and reunification if a child is separated from their care taker.

The mission of CECATN is to ensure that every child in Tennessee receives the best pediatric emergency care to eliminate the effects of severe illness and injury. All the organizations that worked together on this project share in wanting to be as prepared as possible in the event of a disaster, which includes planning for special populations, such as children.

Below are the organizations involved with this endeavor:

Ballad Health
Baptist Memorial Health Care Corporation
Children's Emergency Care Alliance
Children's Hospital at Erlanger
Committee on Pediatric Emergency Care
East Tennessee Children's Hospital
Emergency Management Association of Tennessee
Hickman County Emergency Management
Le Bonheur Children's Hospital
Maury Regional Medical Center
Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt
Tennessee Department of Health

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