

Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP), and Pediatrics in an Emergency

Agenda

- Introduction
- History of PHEP
- Involvement of Providers/Pediatricians
- Final takeaways



History of PHEP (Public Health Emergency Preparedness)



- The Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Program was established in 2002, following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the anthrax letter attacks that followed shortly after. These events highlighted critical gaps in the nation's ability to respond to large-scale public health emergencies, especially those involving bioterrorism.
- The PHEP program has since evolved to support an all-hazards approach- not just terrorism or biological threats, but also natural disasters, emerging infectious diseases, chemical incidents, and radiological emergencies.
- PHEP policy focuses on developing capabilities such as emergency operations coordination, public information and warning, medical countermeasure dispensing, and responder safety.
- Over time, PHEP has played a key role in responses to Hurricane Katrina, H1N1 influenza, Zika virus, COVID-19, and more—supporting efforts in surveillance, communication, coordination, and community resilience.

Pediatric Tie-Ins to the PHEP Program

- **Recognition of Children as a Distinct At-Risk Population**

As the PHEP program matured, it recognized that children are not just small adults-they have unique physical, developmental, and emotional needs during emergencies.

- **Inclusion in Capability Planning**

PHEP capabilities- such as Medical Countermeasure Dispensing and Mass Care- explicitly include planning for pediatric populations.

- **Collaboration with Pediatric Experts**


Providers/Pediatricians are vital partners in ensuring that preparedness and response plans reflect real-world clinical and community-based pediatric care.

- **Support During Emergencies**

During public health emergencies such as H1N1 and COVID-19, PHEP funding supported activities such as pediatric vaccine allocation and administration, guidance for schools, child-care, and outreach tailored to families.

- **Alignment with Pediatric Preparedness Recommendations**

In 2013, the American Academy of Pediatrics and CDC developed pediatric preparedness guidance for public health professionals. PHEP-funded jurisdictions are encouraged to align with these recommendations, which cover surge planning, family reunification, and pediatric mental health support.




CMIST

is a framework used to help identify and address the access and functional needs of individuals during emergencies.

- **C- Communication:** People who may have difficulty receiving, processing or responding to information
- **M- Medical:** People who may require medical care, assistance with medication, durable medical equipment (like oxygen), or ongoing health services.
- **I- Independence:** Individuals who need support to maintain independence, such as those who rely on mobility aids, service animals, or caregivers.
- **S- Supervision:** People who may need help with decision-making or supervision due to cognitive impairments, mental health conditions, or age-related factors.
- **T- Transportation:** Individuals who may need help evacuating or accessing emergency services due to mobility, disability, or lack of transportation.

Why it matters

CMIST is designed to move away from labeling people strictly by disability or diagnosis and instead focus on functional needs that might affect how someone accesses emergency services.



CMIST Pediatric Connection

CMIST is especially useful when planning for children with special health care needs, or those with developmental, behavioral, or physical disabilities.

For example:

- A nonverbal child may fall under **Communication**
- A child with asthma or diabetes falls into **Medical**
- Children in foster care or those with autism might require **Supervision** adjustments



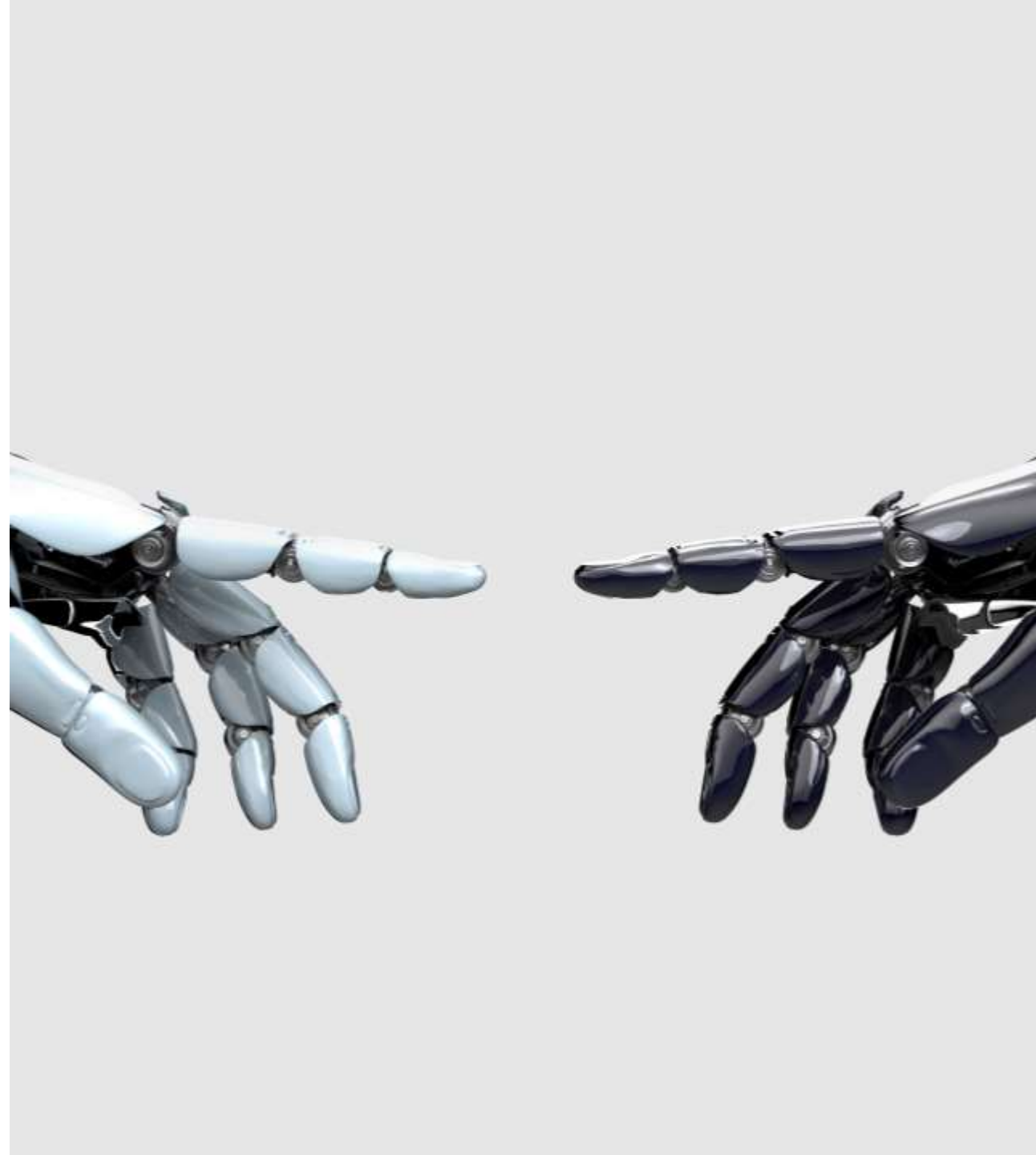
How can you help?

- Help identify children with special healthcare needs who may need extra planning
- Partner in tabletop exercises
- Disseminate public health messaging during outbreaks
- Stay looped in on local alerts and guidance (e.g., via HAN-Health Alert Network)



Q&A

- What do you wish we knew about caring for children in emergencies?
- What tools or guidance would help you keep kids and families safe during disruptions?
- If you could wave a magic wand and fix one emergency-related challenge in your practice, what would it be?



10 Ways Pediatric Providers Support Emergency Preparedness

(without becoming Emergency Managers)

Public Health Preparedness teams want to partner with pediatric providers to ensure children are considered in every phase of an emergency.

Here's how your everyday expertise makes a difference:

🗣️ 1. Advocate for Children's Needs in Emergency Planning

You know that children aren't just small adults. Your input helps shape emergency plans that include age-appropriate care, equipment, and reunification strategies.

🗣️ 2. Be a Trusted Messenger

Families look to you during uncertain times. Your voice is powerful in sharing accurate, timely public health information—especially during outbreaks or disasters.

🏠 3. Support Special Healthcare Needs

Help identify patients who rely on medical devices, specialty medications, or home care services—and collaborate on continuity plans.

📚 4. Engage with Schools & Childcare Centers

Your insights can help local programs develop effective emergency protocols for evacuations, sheltering, and infection prevention.

💉 5. Promote Vaccination & Infection Control

Partner with public health to increase vaccine confidence and support outbreak response (e.g., measles, COVID, flu, RSV).

🧠 6. Recognize Behavioral & Mental Health Impacts

Trauma affects kids differently. You play a vital role in recognizing stress and connecting children to support after crises.

🗣️ 7. Share What's Working—and What's Not

You see gaps we might miss. Let us know where families struggle during disruptions, from medication access to transportation.

📱 8. Stay Connected to Alerts & Local Resources

Enroll in local alert systems or healthcare coalitions so you receive critical updates—and know who to call in an emergency.

🏥 9. Help Shape Pediatric Surge Plans

Hospitals and clinics need pediatric-specific protocols in mass casualty planning. Your expertise helps ensure they're ready.

🤝 10. Collaborate in Exercises or Discussions

You don't have to be a responder to make a big impact—joining a tabletop, advisory call, or workgroup helps shape the systems that keep children safe.

✚ Let's Work Together

PHEP teams are here to support you!

We're working to build strong, inclusive systems that protect the whole community, starting with its youngest members.



Thank you

Garrett County Health Department

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