

April 9, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education & Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education & Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education & Related Agencies  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education & Related Agencies  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Capito, Ranking Member Baldwin, Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As organizations that care deeply about the health and well-being of our nation's children, we write to request that you provide \$7 million in funding for the Pediatric Disaster Care Program within the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR) in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Labor, HHS, Education (LHHS) appropriations bill.

The Pediatric Disaster Care Program (PDCP) was created in 2019 to ensure regional capabilities and capacity to meet children's unique physical and mental health care needs during a disaster, pandemic, or public health event. Children account for 25% of the U.S. population and have unique vulnerabilities in a disaster. Pediatric care requires specialized training, equipment, supplies, and pharmaceuticals that may not be readily available in an emergency, which challenges healthcare facilities and stresses the ability of healthcare systems to respond.

The PDCP plays a vital role in bolstering regional systems of care to support children and families during disasters or other public health emergencies. The PDCP funds three Pediatric Disaster Care Centers of Excellence (CoEs), bringing together children's hospitals, private and public entities, and national organizations to disseminate best practices in pediatric disaster preparedness and response on a regional level. The Gulf 7-Pediatric Disaster Network (G7), covers six U.S. states – Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas – and Puerto Rico. The Western Regional Alliance for Pediatric Emergency Management (WRAP-EM) covers Arizona, California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and Utah. Region V for Kids covers Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

The CoEs develop coordinated pediatric care plans in their region, improving statewide medical surge capacity for pediatric care, educating and training the healthcare and medical workforce on pediatric preparedness and response gaps, and conducting regional exercises. The CoEs were a crucial component of the federal government's response to the 2022-2023 surge of pediatric respiratory illnesses by convening town halls of health care providers, which ensured the appropriate allocation of resources, and produced a pediatric surge playbook to provide response strategies and support. The role of the

CoEs is particularly critical for addressing care capacity in light of a 19.5% reduction in inpatient pediatric beds nationwide.

Pandemic and disaster preparedness efforts throughout the public and private sector must be aligned, coordinated, strengthened, and adequately funded to support a shared pediatric mission and framework. The CoEs are a vital element of that framework ensuring the broader capacity of the nation's medical facilities to meet children's basic physical and mental health needs—as well as those of their entire caregiving/support system—through the enhancement of appropriate training and providing other child-centric resources.

Funding the PDCP in FY27 is essential to enhancing regional capacity to provide critical care and surgical care for sick or injured children across the U.S.

Thank you for your consideration. We urge you to provide \$7 million in funding for this important program and look forward to working with you to improve disaster preparedness for children across our nation.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Pediatric Society  
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs  
Barton Dunant  
Bridgeport Hospital  
Children's Minnesota  
Children's Hospital Association  
Children's of Alabama  
Children's Wisconsin  
Cincinnati Children's Hospital  
Corewell Health Helen DeVos Children's Hospital  
Helen C Miller MD PC  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National League for Nursing  
National Pediatric Disaster Coalition Inc.  
New York City Pediatric Disaster Coalition  
NYP  
Pediatric Trauma Society (PTS)  
Texas Children's Hospital  
The Lundquist Institute  
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children's