



## For Your Benefit

# AAP resources address emergency preparedness in pediatric offices

from the **AAP Department of Membership**

Natural, environmental and man-made disasters increasingly threaten the health of the world's children. Pediatric practices can play a key role in improving emergency readiness and community resilience and helping families plan for and respond to the physical and psychological impact of disasters.

The change in the frequency and severity of disasters was among eight trends identified by the AAP Vision of Pediatrics 2020 Task Force that will influence the profession of pediatrics over the next 10 to 15 years. The Academy is working to provide members with the skills and resources to prepare for and respond to disasters, as well as to improve day-to-day pediatric emergency readiness.

The AAP Disaster Preparedness Advisory Council (DPAC) has created the following resources to assist members in preparing for a disaster.

### Disaster Preparedness for Pediatric Practices: An Online Tool

Emergency preparedness should be exercised at all organizational levels. Office-based physicians (whether they work in a hospital or in a free-standing practice) should understand their office's role within the context of the community's disaster plan.

A written preparedness plan can help practices reduce risks, maintain practice operations and ensure a medical home for the children in their care. Pediatricians should prepare, regularly update and practice an office plan that is coordinated with local hospital and community emergency response plans.

The online tool, at <http://practice.aap.org/disasterpreptool.aspx>, includes a template office disaster plan. A three-minute automated demo can be viewed at [www.aap.org/pcorss/demos/disasterprep.html](http://www.aap.org/pcorss/demos/disasterprep.html).

### Promoting adjustment and helping children cope in disasters

The Academy emphasizes that a regionalized and coordinated emergency and trauma care system for children is needed. This care system also must consider the needs of children within the context of family

and community. This framework is particularly suited to the office-based pediatrician, who brings knowledge about responses and the needs of children affected by disasters, and can work across public systems to render effective medical, educational and community interventions. A key objective is to ensure that the biological and psychological needs of children are addressed before, during and after a disaster strikes.

These resources, at [www.aap.org/disasters/adjustment.cfm](http://www.aap.org/disasters/adjustment.cfm), focus on helping children understand and adjust to loss, helping pediatricians and others provide psychological first aid and mental health services, and supporting adults (including pediatricians) to help themselves when they are involved in a traumatic event.

### AAP Disaster Preparedness Contact Network

The DPAC created a Disaster Preparedness Contact Network in 2008 to identify members who are involved in disaster/emergency preparedness; provide a mechanism (through an electronic mailing list) to share progress on AAP initiatives, resources and opportunities regarding disaster preparedness; and create a forum of members who could support AAP initiatives by providing their expertise, representing the Academy at meetings, presenting at conferences, identifying/reviewing resources, etc. Quarterly newsletters are provided to members and can be viewed at [www.aap.org/disasters/newsletter.cfm](http://www.aap.org/disasters/newsletter.cfm).

For more information or to join the Contact Network, e-mail [DisasterReady@aap.org](mailto:DisasterReady@aap.org).

## RESOURCES

- For more information on the Vision of Pediatrics project, visit [www.aap.org/visionofpeds/](http://www.aap.org/visionofpeds/).
- For more information on disaster preparedness activities, visit the AAP Children and Disasters Web site, [www.aap.org/disasters/](http://www.aap.org/disasters/).