

Hospital Surge Response for the Youngest Casualties of Disaster

[The NW Oregon Health Preparedness Organization](#) (HPO), an RDPO partner, is a regional planning collaboration of regional hospitals and health systems, local and state public health, county emergency management, emergency medical services, medical societies, safety net clinics, and behavioral health. The HPO works to ensure that Northwest Oregon is prepared and responds effectively and efficiently to large-scale health emergencies that have impacts across institutional and jurisdictional lines.

Building on the HPO's nationally acclaimed trauma and burn surge plans, the HPO launched its Pediatric Surge Planning project in June 2016, with funding support from the RDPO. The overall goal of this multi-year project is to support hospitals and healthcare systems in increasing their capabilities to care for pediatric patients during a surge event, such as an earthquake, pandemic, or other high casualty/illness event.

Though children represent 25% of Oregon's population, only 4% of critical care beds in the state are for pediatric patients. "Children's unique physical and mental characteristics put them at greater risk for injury or illness in a disaster," said HPO Manager Kathryn Richer. "These two disparities are the drivers for the HPO prioritizing the work, and the RDPO funded its staffing."



To lead the planning, the HPO convened a "Pediatric Surge Leadership Group" (PSLG) comprised of pediatric physicians, pediatric nursing leadership, and hospital emergency managers from the three pediatric specialty care centers in Healthcare Preparedness Region 1: Randall Children's Hospital at Legacy Emanuel, Doernbecher Children's Hospital at OHSU, and Providence St. Vincent Medical Center. Each of these institutions provide what is termed a "full pediatric complement of services." These services include a children's emergency department, acute pediatric units, a Pediatric intensive care unit (ICU), and a Neonatal ICU.

In 2016-2017, PSLG members completed a survey to review their capacities in patient care units, hospital support services, and hospital administration. In 2018, the HPO will synthesize survey results and issue a regional report describing regional pediatric capacities for specialty care. This report will help institutions have a picture of "daily capacities" and a foundation to build a contingent surge plan for an immediate 20% increase of patients in four hours, and a plan for slower moving crisis surge events, which would overwhelm the pediatric institutions. The HPO will provide planning tools (e.g., EOP Pediatric Annex) and other guidance to support institutions completing their pediatric surge plans and enhancing their operational capacity to support a surge in pediatric patients.

In 2018-2019, the HPO will turn its focus on supporting surge planning at non-pediatric hospitals, knowing that resources at the three children's institutions are limited.

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