

Checklist for Pediatric Practices and Other Health Care Providers: Helping Patients with Special Health Care Needs Prepare for Emergencies

Pediatric practices are trusted sources of information before, during, and after disasters, especially for families with children and youth with special health care needs. Your efforts can make a big difference in how families experience disasters that threaten the health of their children.

Make sure your practice is prepared for emergencies:

- Update the practice plan for emergencies:
 - Include plans for business continuity (i.e. remaining open) in the event of staff and supply shortages.
 - Plan for loss of power, including the use of paper copies of patient records and safely storing vaccines, pharmaceuticals and biologic specimens that require refrigeration (e.g., generator or off-site storage).
 - Familiarize yourself with the operations of your health system partners (including nursing agencies, durable medical equipment (DME) providers, pharmacies) so that you are prepared to work together during an emergency.
 - Plan for daily huddles or communications with staff so they understand new roles and workflows.
 - Update the practice website and social media so patients know how to reach you through after-hours numbers and how to request medication refills and other services.
 - Adapt practice for operational efficiencies – telehealth, virtual registering, patient encounters for weights or vaccine - or work with community partners for these services.
- Sign up for Health Alerts from your local and state public health departments and from CDC.
- Sign up for emergency information from your local emergency management agency.

Help your patients with special health care needs prepare for emergencies when they visit your office:

- Integrate prompts into the electronic health record or chart so that the following questions are asked annually:
 - Does the family have an evacuation plan? A back-up power plan/shelter-in-place plan?
 - Is the family signed up for computer-aided dispatch (911 center)? Other local emergency resources?
 - Does the family have a copy of the current care plan or summary?
- Help families complete an Emergency Information Form (EIF) and help them to keep it current.
- Encourage patients to use the patient portal to access medical information in emergencies, especially if they have relocated to another location. Use the portal to send messages to groups of patients.
- Let patients know how the practice will share information with them during emergencies. Plan to use multiple methods concurrently:
 - Text messages - make sure you have up-to-date mobile numbers for your patients
 - Practice website and voice mail - post when you'll be open, what services available
 - Social media – Twitter and Facebook. Consider creating a closed group for at-risk patients
 - Patient portal - make sure you have up-to-date email addresses for families

Resources for Your Patients:

- [Checklists for families with special health care needs](#)
- [Get Connected – local information resources for families](#)
- [Home evacuation, sheltering-in-place recommendations](#)
- [Care plans and Emergency Information Forms](#)