



NEWS RELEASE

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IDPH Awards \$249,000 Grant to Peoria Hospital to Improve Pediatric Emergency, Disaster Readiness

Funding for Children’s Hospital of Illinois will be used to assess disaster care needs statewide, enhance training

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has awarded a \$249,000 grant to a Peoria hospital to improve statewide pediatric emergency and disaster readiness capabilities. The award to OSF HealthCare Children’s Hospital of Illinois will support several initiatives, including assessment of hospital disaster plans and identifying and addressing disparities in emergency and disaster care for children.

“Children have unique medical and emotional needs compared to adults,” said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra, a pediatrician. “IDPH is thrilled to partner with OSF Healthcare Children’s Hospital of Illinois to maintain and improve our already high degree of statewide pediatric emergency and disaster readiness capabilities. This grant will advance various initiatives intended to build and secure brighter futures for Illinois’s children.”

Under the grant, OSF Children’s Hospital will conduct assessments of disaster plans at more than 30 Illinois hospitals during the current fiscal year, with an eye toward inclusion of pediatric components to those plans. OSF Children’s Hospital will also develop resources and educational materials as well as share best practices that can be used to address identified gaps and disparities in that care.

The most recent assessment from the National Pediatric Readiness Project gives Illinois a score of 89 out of 100 in terms of hospital emergency departments’ ability to meet the unique needs of pediatric patients. Any score above 88 indicates a high degree of readiness to address those needs and is associated with lower mortality for ill and injured children. Illinois’s statewide score is well above the national median score of 70. Hospitals that participate in a pediatric readiness recognition program tend to score substantially higher than those that have not done so.

OSF Saint Francis Medical Center is a tertiary care center in Peoria that is designated as a Level I Adult and Pediatric Trauma Center and serves as the Regional Hospital Coordinating Center (RHCC) in Central Illinois. The affiliated OSF Children’s Hospital provides specialized pediatric services. Their geographic location will lend both an urban and rural perspective to the projects that will be conducted through this grant.

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The grant will also support OSF Children's Hospital in coordinating the School Nurse Emergency Care (SNEC) course. This unique training program in Illinois is designed to enhance the assessment, triaging and treatment skills of school nurses when confronted with various medical emergencies in the school setting. Grant funding will also support building upon and enhancing other pediatric initiatives that are currently in place within our state, such as developing educational webinars to assist hospitals in assessing the medical needs of infants and children.

The grant is administered by IDPH with funding from the federal government through the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR) and its Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP). Illinois's HPP program supports efforts that specifically target the needs of children and bolster the work of IDPH's Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) program. HPP also funds ten healthcare coalitions around the state, and provides funding to the Illinois Medical Emergency Response Team (IMERT), the statewide disaster team, as well as to the Illinois Primary Health Care Association.

The grant is for FY 2024, and is renewable annually, dependent on future federal funding.

For more information on the OSF Children's Hospital pediatric readiness program, go to [Pediatric Readiness | OSF Children's Hospital \(osfhealthcare.org\)](https://www.osfhealthcare.org/pediatric-readiness).

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