UNDERSTANDING THE PEDIATRIC SURGE CRISIS

The crisis is making headlines now. But how did we get here?

Systemic Challenges

#1: Low pediatric reimbursement + high costs = shrinking services

2X as many children 18 and under are on Medicaid vs. adults ages 19-64. Meanwhile, Medicaid reimburses at 22% less than Medicare.5,6

+11% Hospital expenses were 11% higher in 2021 than in 2019.7

-19% Pediatric inpatient units have decreased by more than 19% over 10 years; rural areas have seen a decrease of 26%.8

#2: Staff stress & shortages, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic

35% More than 1 in 3 clinicians report at least one symptom of burnout.9

23% of hospitals report a critical staffing shortage.10

#3: Gaps in everyday readiness for children’s emergencies

69/100 was the median score on a national assessment of how ready emergency departments (EDs) are for pediatric patients.11

BUT

4X Low pediatric readiness in EDs is associated with a four-fold increase in mortality rate.12

&

90% of American families do not have an ED closest to them that is considered pediatric ready.13
Public Health Challenges

#4: The growing pediatric mental health crisis

+280%
The suicide rate in children ages 5-12 increased 280% from 1999-2018.14

68%
of U.S. counties are designated as mental health professional shortage areas.15

+6-10%
Pediatric utilization of EDs for mental health has been increasing 6% to 10% per year.16

#5: A tidal wave of respiratory illnesses

+68%
From October to December, the number of children with COVID-19 at hospital admission increased 68%.17

+14%
Flu hospitalization of young children reached nearly 14% in November 2022, the highest point for that period since 2009.18

+300%
RSV hospitalization among children in November 2022 was more than quadruple the rate a year earlier.19

The result: an unprecedented pediatric care crisis.

How you can help
Healthcare professionals:
• Use hospital and prehospital clinical resources related to capacity and respiratory illnesses in children.
• Participate in pediatric readiness projects.
• Take part in a quality improvement collaboratives.

Everyone:
Promote prevention. Keep kids up to date on seasonal and routine vaccinations, and follow public health guidance to limit disease transmission.


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