

Pediatrics: Kids need specialized care in hospital emergency departments

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According to a recent IOM report, only 6 percent of U.S. hospital emergency departments are fully equipped to properly care for children. With high rates of novel H1N1 (swine) flu expected this winter, the time to address these deficiencies is immediate.

In a joint policy statement published in *Pediatrics*, "Guidelines for Care of [Children](#) in the Emergency Department," pediatric emergency medicine specialists and others provide recommendations for appropriate equipment, training, medications, and policies for pediatric emergency care.

"Children account for 20 percent of all emergency department visits, yet most hospitals are unprepared to provide appropriate care," said Joseph L. Wright, MD, MPH, Senior Vice President of the Child Health Advocacy Institute at Children's National Medical Center. "The potential widespread impact of the Novel H1N1 strain of influenza underscores the urgency to ensure that our kids receive the best care when they come to their community hospital's [emergency department](#)."

Dr. Wright is trained as a pediatric emergency medicine physician and helped write the revised policy statement, released in the journal *Pediatrics*. Dr. Wright was also on the Institute of Medicine committee that wrote the 2006 report, "Emergency Care for Children: Growing Pains."

Examples of appropriate care can include the size of equipment, such as tubes for intubation, as well as ready access to specialists like pediatric anesthesiologists. The existence of specific policies and procedures to address the needs of children and families, particularly in times of surge, are also critically important.

Source: Children's National Medical Center ([news](#) : [web](#))

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