

# The Pony Express

Improving Emergency Medical Care for Children All Across Texas

## EMS for Children Mission Statement

To reduce child and youth morbidity and mortality caused by severe illness or trauma by providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time.



## Happy New Year!

January 1, 2024 kicked off the 40th anniversary of the federal EMS for Children Program! Happy Birthday EMSC!

This year will see the first ever comprehensive national assessment of EMS agencies. The Prehospital Pediatric Readiness Project Assessment is set to launch the first week of May! This is a national multi-phase initiative focused on the prehospital EMS system. The assessment is led by the EMS for Children Program in partnership with 30 national organizations and stakeholders. As such, we will be focusing on our EMS agencies this year to ensure all of our EMS agencies in Texas are pediatric ready.

We will also see the amended trauma rules published later this year. The proposed amendments include many aspects of pediatric readiness that will help ensure our trauma centers are prepared to take care of children.

Thank you for all you do on behalf of pediatric readiness in Texas!

If you would like more information about how you can become involved, please contact Sam Vance, Program Manager, EMSC State Partnership, Texas at: [spvance@bcm.edu](mailto:spvance@bcm.edu)

## Upcoming Events

- Feb. 29 [EMSC Advisory Council Meeting](#): Virtual
- Mar. 6 - 8 [Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council meetings](#): Austin, TX
- Mar. 18-20 [Texas EMS Medical Director Conference](#): Round Rock, TX
- Apr. 19-21 [TCEP Connect](#): Lake Conroe, TX
- May 2024 [PPRP Assessment](#): Virtual



[www.bcm.edu/emsc](http://www.bcm.edu/emsc)

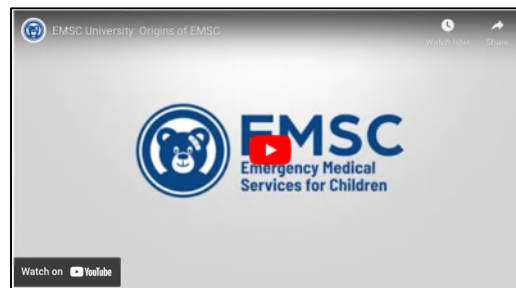
# Celebrating 40 Years of Improving Pediatric Emergency Care

In 1984, Congress enacted legislation authorizing the creation of the EMSC Program - the only federal program dedicated to serving acutely ill and injured children. Beginning January 1, 2024, the program will celebrate four decades of progress toward its mission of high-quality emergency care for children across the nation.

The program is housed under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) within the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)'s Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). The EMSC Program includes: The [EMSC Innovation & Improvement Center](#); The [EMSC Data Center](#); The [Pediatric Emergency Care Applied Research Network](#); [State Partnership Programs](#); and [Targeted Issues Grants](#).

The EMSC Program also supports cross-cutting initiatives like the [National Pediatric Readiness Project](#) and the [National Prehospital Pediatric Readiness Project](#) and works closely with [the Pediatric Pandemic Network](#), which is part of HRSA's EMSC Branch.

Click on the images below to view a video on the history of EMSC, or a timeline of the program.



## 2024 EMS for Children Crew of the Year Nominations Underway

National EMS Week 2024 is May 19 thru May 25, and Wednesday, May 22, is set-aside for National Emergency Medical Services for Children Day. National EMS Week is an annual celebration of the dedication and commitment of EMS providers all over the country making differences in the lives of millions of Americans every day. It also provides us with an opportunity to bring together EMS agencies and their local communities to focus attention on illness and injury prevention and raise awareness about issues important to the continued development and improvement of EMS and Trauma systems.

National EMS for Children Day places a spotlight on the delivery of high-quality emergency medical care for children, focusing on the unique needs of critically ill or injured pediatric patients and the challenges faced by EMS professionals in meeting those needs. Hundreds of communities around the nation are planning special events to honor the men and women who provide emergency care to our children and to raise awareness about safety and prevention and the ongoing need to improve and expand specialized care for children in the prehospital setting.

In honor of EMS for Children Day 2024, the Texas EMS for Children State Partnership is now accepting nominations for the 15th annual EMS for Children Crew of the Year Award. This award is granted to an EMS crew or station who has displayed outstanding care for a child in an emergency medical or trauma event,

demonstrated exceptional effort in the development of pediatric training or quality improvement programs or was instrumental in planning and conducting creative injury prevention programs.

The awards will be presented to the winning nomination during a ceremony on the National Emergency Medical Services for Children Day on May 22, 2024. Recipients will receive individual certificates of appreciation and a plaque for their station or crew quarters recognizing them as champions in the emergency care for children in Texas.

Thank you for helping us recognize the men and women who go above and beyond to serve the children in our communities.

To submit a nomination for the EMS for Children Crew of the Year, [Click Here](#).



Pictured from left, 2023 EMSC Crew of the Year Award Recipients of Wilson County ESD 4: Medical Director Dr. Stephen Harper, Training Captain William Miles, EMT-B Scott Calame, EMT-P Zachary Ramirez, LP Kevin Ford, EMT-B Pete Balderas, Captain EMT Lee Posey, and EMS Director David Adams.

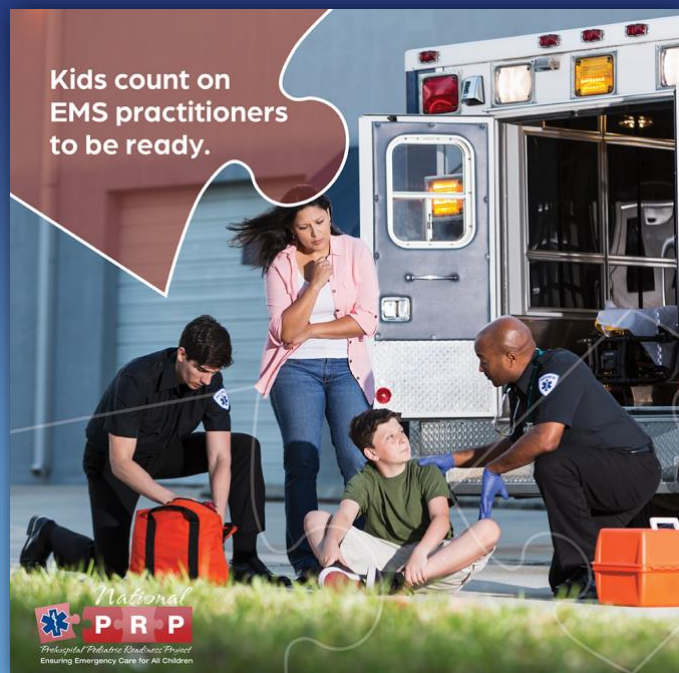
## PPRP Assessment Coming in 2024!

As you may be aware, the launch of the first National Prehospital Pediatric Readiness Project (PPRP) Assessment will be in the first week of May 2024. The PPRP Assessment is based on the [2020 Pediatric Readiness in Emergency Medical Services Systems joint policy statement and technical report](#). It is a national multi-phase initiative, focused on the prehospital EMS system. The assessment is led by the EMS for Children Program in partnership with more than 30 national organizations and stakeholders. The assessment will cover all EMS agencies in Texas that transport patients and First Responder Organizations (FROs) that respond to 911 calls.

Respondents to the PPRP Assessment will receive their overall weighted pediatric readiness score and an agency specific gap analysis report automatically generated upon completion of the assessment. This report will also include links to evidence-based resources. Additionally, respondents will receive a comparative analysis benchmarking their agency with similar sized EMS agencies (by annual pediatric volume) across the United States.

In November 2020, the Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC) endorsed efforts of the jointly led national Prehospital Pediatric Readiness Project, including participation in the nationwide assessment, to identify and reduce pediatric specific gaps within EMS systems and endorsed the adoption of tools and resources to improve pediatric readiness.

For a preview of the Prehospital Pediatric Readiness Project Assessment, click [HERE](#).







While the majority of EMS and fire-rescue agencies provide emergency care to children, pediatric calls are rare. In fact, because many agencies see fewer than eight pediatric patients per month, EMS clinicians often don't feel capable or confident when caring for children. Pediatric readiness can reduce anxiety and increase confidence, and research suggests it may also improve outcomes. But what is pediatric readiness and how do you know if your agency is really ready to take care of children?

The Prehospital Pediatric Readiness Project (PPRP) can answer these questions—and more. The goal of this national project is to improve prehospital care for acutely ill and injured children, which translates into EMS and fire-rescue agencies being trained, equipped, and prepared in accordance with national recommendations.

So where do you start? The PPRP has created a number of tools designed to provide your agency with practical, usable information to understand how ready you really are to provide emergency care for children and address potential gaps. There are a three key steps:

### **Step 1:** Download the [Prehospital Pediatric Readiness EMS Agency Checklist](#)

The EMS Agency Checklist can help you identify, in general terms, how “peds ready” you are. It is divided into seven sections:

1. Education and Competencies for Providers
2. Equipment and Supplies
3. Patient and Medication Safety
4. Patient and Family-Centered Care in EMS
5. Policies, Procedures, and Protocols (including Medical Oversight)
6. Quality Improvement/Performance Improvement
7. Interaction with Systems of Care

### **Step 2:** Complete the PPRP Assessment

In May 2024, EMS and fire-rescue agencies will have the opportunity to complete the PPRP Assessment. Based on the same seven checklist categories, this online tool includes in-depth questions to assess your current pediatric readiness and identify areas for improvement. After completing the assessment, which takes between 30 and 45 minutes, you will receive a report about any gaps as well as benchmarking information.

### **Step 3:** Use the PPRP Toolkit

Once you've completed the assessment and understand your gaps, you can access the free resources in the [EMS Agency Toolkit](#) and begin the process of making sure your agency is really pediatric ready.

To learn more about the PPRP, visit the PPRP [webpage](#). Or connect with the Texas EMSC Program Manager, Sam Vance: [spvance@bcm.edu](mailto:spvance@bcm.edu) or 832-8



## PEC Podcast: The Prehospital Pediatric Readiness Project

The National Association of EMS Physician's Prehospital Emergency Care Podcast presents Episode 137: The Prehospital Pediatric Readiness Project.

In this episode Texas EMS for Children Program Director, Dr. Kathryn Kothari, and Colorado EMS for Children Program Director, Dr. Kathleen Adelgais joins the Pediatric EMS Podcast to talk about the National Prehospital Pediatric Readiness Project (PPRP). What is it? What do we do about it? And what does it achieve?

To listen to the podcast, click [HERE](#).



## New Resources on Child Abuse: Pediatric Education and Advocacy Kit (PEAK)

One in four children in the United States are abused or neglected, and 18% of these children experience physical abuse. The Emergency Medical Services for Children Program (EMSC) has released a Pediatric Education and Advocacy Kit (PEAK) on child abuse to help hospital and prehospital practitioners, in partnership with patients and families, identify and manage children with suspected physical abuse. PEAK: Child Abuse features pragmatic, synthesized, and multidisciplinary resources, including new bottom-line recommendations, a simulation kit, podcasts, a learning module, and more.

All resources are free and open access. View the resources [HERE](#).



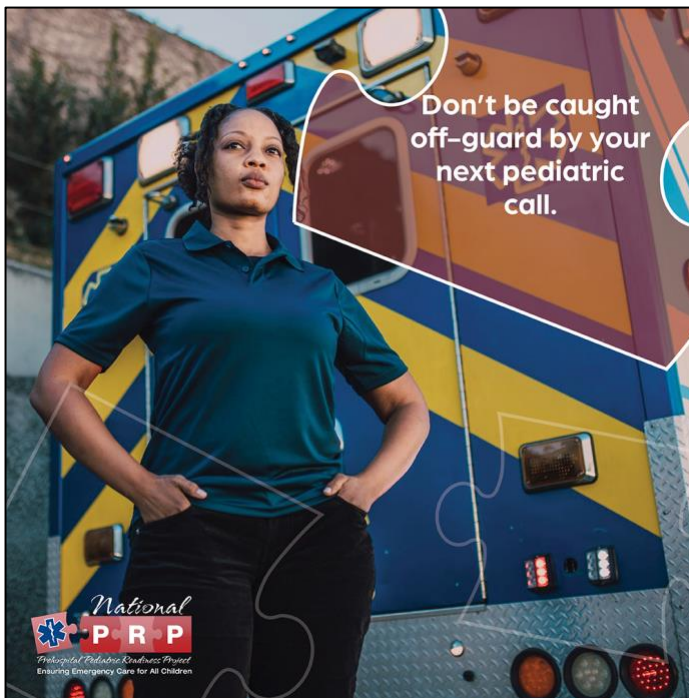


## DSHS Pediatric Transport Survey

The Texas Department of State Health Service (DSHS) Injury Prevention Unit is surveying all emergency medical services (EMS) providers and first responders as a follow up to the 2023 EMS Conference. The Injury Prevention Unit is sending this survey to learn more about how Texas children are being transported.

The survey information will help the Injury Prevention Unit identify potential areas for future collaboration and support. The survey is anonymous and will take you approximately five (5) minutes to complete.

To complete the survey, please click [HERE](#).



## Starkey Appointed as 2024 EMS for Children Fellow

On behalf of the EMSC Program, the EMSC Innovation and Improvement Center (EIIC) has announced the 2024 cohort of fellows. The 13 total fellows span numerous disciplines and were selected from across the country. Each fellow is assigned to an EIIC domain and will receive mentorship from that domain as they engage on key EMSC activities and projects, including national steering committees.

Representing Texas in the Quality Improvement Collaboratives Domain is Bradley Starkey. Bradley is the Deputy Chief of Administration, Clinical Compliance Officer, and Pediatric Emergency Care Coordinator (PECC) for the Galveston County Health District with the Galveston Area Ambulance Authority. He has been in EMS for over 25 years, both in the military and civilian sector working in prehospital and hospital positions. Bradley was also one of the recipients of the 2022 Texas EMS for Children Crew of the Year Award for their work in pediatric quality improvement.

Please join us in congratulating Brad on his appointment to the 2024 EMSC Fellows Program!



# Pediatric Readiness in Texas; It's Coming

By Sally Snow and Sam Vance.

DSHS has proposed changes in the trauma rules to include a component of Pediatric Readiness (Peds Ready). The American College of Surgeons - Committee on Trauma (ACS-COT) has also incorporated Peds Ready in its new addition of *Resources for Optimal Care of the Injured Patient* published in March 2022. What does that mean for Texas Trauma Centers?

In 2021, 267 of 525 hospital and free-standing emergency departments (FSEDs) in Texas participated in the National Pediatric Readiness Project (NPRP) assessment. These 267 hospital and FSEDs cumulatively treated 778,402 children in their emergency departments (EDs) January - August 2021. The majority were treated in general ED's in community hospitals. The average score of Texas hospitals on this assessment was 74 on a scale of 0 – 100, demonstrating that many hospitals lacked the nationally recommended pediatric readiness core elements, including pediatric emergency care coordinators, quality improvement plans for pediatric patients, and disaster plans addressing issues specific to children.<sup>1</sup>

Studies have shown, in the absence of pediatric specific verification programs like the Texas EMSC Voluntary Pediatric Recognition Program (VPRP), designated trauma centers are **no more likely** to achieve high pediatric readiness scores than non-designated facilities. **The average score of Texas hospitals designated as trauma centers was 73** on a scale of 0 - 100. **Non-designated trauma centers had an average score of 74.**

While the development of trauma centers has resulted in improved outcomes overall, the adoption of pediatric specific elements by pediatric trauma centers have resulted in even greater decreases in morbidity and mortality for injured children.

This is likely related to increased adherence to pediatric-specific needs (i.e., pediatric readiness) and alludes to the potential impact of pediatric readiness on healthcare outcomes. Indeed, **pediatric readiness is associated with a 4-fold decrease in mortality for critically ill children.**<sup>2</sup>

While trauma verification requirements have led to higher standards of care, the American College of Surgeons - Committee on Trauma (ACS-COT), recognizing gaps in the care of injured children, announced new pediatric standards for all verified trauma centers, including a standard based on the National Pediatric Readiness Project beginning September 2023. Likewise, the revised Texas Trauma Rules will also include aspects of pediatric readiness projected to begin November, 2024. This will impact approximately 60% of all Texas EDs.

To help trauma centers prepare for the new standard, the EMS for Children Innovation and Improvement Center (EIIC) has all the resources needed to know what to do to be peds ready. To learn more about pediatric readiness and access related resources and tools [here](#).

## References

1. National EMS for Children Data Analysis Resource Center. 2021 *Pediatric Readiness Assessment State/Territory Frequency Report*. Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah. (December 2021).
2. Remick K, Gaines B, Ely M, Richards R, Fendya D, Edgerton EA. Pediatric emergency department readiness among US trauma hospitals. *J Trauma Acute Care Surg*. 2019 May;86(5):803-809. doi: 10.1097/TA.0000000000002172. PMID: 30601455.







FREE LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

# Texas Pediatric Readiness Education Series

The Texas Pediatric Readiness Improvement Project is a collaborative effort endorsed by the Governor's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC) to improve pediatric outcomes and support rural trauma centers in meeting the proposed Texas trauma rules slated to become effective in September 2024.

Beginning in January 2024, 1-hour virtual sessions will highlight evidence-based practices and resources for adoption in the emergency department, review standardized simulation cases, and integrate opportunities to engage in pediatric quality improvement efforts. **The education series is available at no cost.**

Here's a snapshot of topics slated for the monthly series:

- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Non-Accidental Trauma
- Pediatric Assessment & Triage
- Newborn Resuscitation

Continuing education credit will be available for nurses and EMS personnel.

Texas EMS, Trauma and Acute Care Foundation is approved as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by Louisiana State Nurses Association Approver Unit, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.  
LSNA Provider No. 4002155

**When: 3rd Thursday of every month**

**Time: 7am - 8am**

- January 18
- February 15
- March 21
- April 18
- May 16
- June 20
- July 18
- August 15
- September 19
- October 17
- November 21
- December 19
- January 16, 2025
- February 20, 2025

[To Register, Click HERE](#)