



**Contact:**

**Jo Flattery, Dan Klores Communications, 212-981-5228**

**Randee Sachs Levine, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, 212-305-8044**

**Rebecca Hut, The Children's Health Fund, 212-535-2163**

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**Dr. Irwin Redlener Appointed by Speaker Pelosi for National  
Commission on Children and Disasters**

**Commission Will Address the Special Needs of Children  
in Response to Major Disasters and Emergencies in the U.S.**

(New York, NY) – April 7, 2008 – U. S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi has announced the selection of Irwin Redlener, M.D., director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health and president of The Children's Health Fund, to serve as one of her two appointments to the National Commission on Children and Disasters.

The Commission, whose members are appointed by congressional leadership and the President, will be comprised of 10 members and is charged with conducting a comprehensive study to examine and assess the needs of children in preparation for, response to and recovery from all hazards, including major disasters and emergencies. A final report will be submitted to the President and Congress with specific recommendations to address the needs of children.

"It is imperative that the nation be more attentive and better prepared to manage the profound immediate and long-term needs of children when disaster strikes. A recent joint study between The Children's Health Fund and The Mailman School at Columbia found that two and a half years after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita more than 50,000 children remain at-risk for long-term health and social problems," said Dr. Redlener. "Through research and improved planning, we can help ensure better outcomes in the future. I am honored to be asked to join this Commission and to bring my experience to bear on finding real-world prescriptions that respond to the special needs of children following natural or terror-related disasters."

Dr. Redlener is Associate Dean, Professor of Clinical Public Health, and Director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. Dr. Redlener, a pediatrician/child advocate, is also President and Co-founder of the Children's Health Fund and has expertise in health care systems, crisis response and public policy with

respect to access to health care for under-served populations. From 1986 to 1987, Dr. Redlener was Director of Grants and Medical Director of USA for Africa and Hands Across America, and traveled in Europe, the former Soviet Union, and Central America and has assisted relief efforts in Honduras, Guatemala, Ethiopia, and South Florida. He also organized medical response teams in the immediate aftermath of the World Trade Center attacks on 9/11 and has had disaster management leadership experience internationally and nationally. Recently, Dr. Redlener worked extensively in the Gulf region following Hurricane Katrina where he helped establish on-going medical and public health programs.

The National Center for Disaster Preparedness (NCDP) at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health is an academically-based resource center dedicated to the study, analysis and enhancement of the nation's ability to prepare for and respond to major disasters, including terrorism. The NCDP has a wide-ranging research, training and education, and advocacy agenda, with a special interest in mega-disasters. Senior faculty and staff have testified at Congressional hearings, presented at numerous conferences and meetings, and consulted with governmental, healthcare, non-profit, industry, and community leaders. The NCDP engages the public health workforce and communities in preparing for catastrophic events, while helping to integrate preparedness efforts into the nation's existing infrastructure. The Center encompasses the CDC-funded Center for Public Health Preparedness at Columbia, which has trained over 15,000 responders in public health preparedness, incident management, and recognition and response to incidents involving weapons of mass destruction using table-top drills, exercises, and distance learning technologies. For more information, visit [www.mailman.columbia.edu](http://www.mailman.columbia.edu) or [www.ncdp.mailman.columbia.edu](http://www.ncdp.mailman.columbia.edu).

The Children's Health Fund (CHF) - Because millions of children in America aren't getting the health care they need, CHF is committed to providing health care to the nation's most medically under-served children and their families through the development and support of innovative medical programs, response to public health crises, and the promotion of guaranteed access to appropriate health care for all children.

Founded in 1987 by singer/songwriter Paul Simon, and pediatrician/advocate Irwin Redlener, MD, the CHF's health projects have provided more than 1.6 million patient visits. CHF partners with major academic medical centers to deliver health care to disadvantaged children and families, via state-of-the-art mobile medical units, in both rural and urban areas across the country.

For more information about CHF's activities, visit their website at: [www.childrenshealthfund.org](http://www.childrenshealthfund.org).

# # #