As Hurricane Harvey and torrential rain continue to wreak havoc on the Gulf Coast, Children’s Health Fund (CHF) is working with our emergency response partner, the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University (NCDP), and our National Network affiliates in Texas and Louisiana to immediately respond to the needs of children.

Already on the ground, and working with the most vulnerable children and families, CHF partners are well positioned to respond and are integrated into federal, state and local response efforts.

TEXAS

CHF partners in Austin and Dallas are actively preparing to meet the health care needs of displaced children and families en route to the emergency shelters. Over 30,000 people are expected to be placed in shelters in Dallas and Austin over the next few days. These shelters include convention centers, schools and public buildings where those in harm’s way will seek safety and begin the process of recovery.

LOUISIANA

CHF program partners in Baton Rouge and New Orleans, already beset by one of the wettest summers on record and still trying to recover from last year’s record flooding, are now in the path for more torrential rain and damage. Our Louisiana doctors, nurses, and mental health teams are bracing for another emergency response and need our continued support. CHF’s Louisiana teams are working non-stop to stay ahead of this evolving crisis.

The CHF Hurricane Harvey Emergency Fund has been established to support children and families who immediately need our help. Recovery from Hurricane Harvey’s destruction will be a long arduous process—and CHF will respond in a way that builds on our history of disaster response. Our emergency response experience dates back to Hurricane Andrew in Florida in 1992, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, Superstorm Sandy in 2012 and most recently the lead crisis in Flint, Michigan. When we respond, we do so with children’s immediate and long term needs in mind. That’s why we are still there, long after the “emergency” is over.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

In the immediate days and weeks, we will work with and through our local teams and partners in Texas and Louisiana to support children, families and communities through the following activities:

- **Direct Services Support and Provision of Care** to evacuated families who are placed into shelters over the coming days, and to vulnerable children and families already residing in these host communities. These services can include medical care, mental health support, and case management. The CHF teams have the flexibility of being able to deliver care directly in the shelter sites, and also to bring in mobile clinics when needed.
LONG-TERM CARE
As the first few months and major media coverage fade, we have found that the needs of traumatized children and their families increase.

In the weeks and months following the acute response phase, the CHF-NCDP Disaster Response Team and our local teams and partners in Texas and Louisiana will support affected children, families, and communities through the following activities, as needed:

- **Provision of trauma-based care** to meet physical and mental health needs.
- **Case management services** coupled with clinical services, with the understanding that the families’ needs for shelter, clothing, food, and other social support services must be met to help support their physical and mental health and safety.
- **In partnership with NCDP, assessing damage and resiliency of community agencies** and institutions serving large numbers of affected children (like schools and long-term shelter sites) through tools and services such as:
  - Trainings, resources, and materials on topics such as child, family, and community trauma recovery, mental health support, and resilience.
  - Engagement in city and state level community re-stabilization, highlighting the needs of children, which are often overlooked.

*Children’s Health Fund and the National Center for Disaster Preparedness launched Operation Assist to help families hit by Hurricane Katrina. In addition to medical care, Operation Assist provided much-needed therapy for traumatized children and professional support and training to mental health professionals.*

**About CHF:** Children’s Health Fund ensures high quality health care to the nation’s most medically-underserved children. We do this through expanding access to care, reducing health barriers to learning, engaging in advocacy and partnerships, and activating in times of disaster to serve those most at-risk: children. Across the nation, mobile clinics and fixed-site health centers bring comprehensive care—medical, mental health, case management, nutrition services, chronic disease management and much more to low-income, at-risk families. In 2016, CHF’s national network of programs in 14 states and the District of Columbia cumulatively reached over 93,000 individuals via 289,700 health care encounters provided at 367 different locations.

**About NCDP:** The National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University works to understand and improve the nation’s capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. NCDP focuses on the readiness of governmental and non-governmental systems; the complexities of population recovery; the power of community engagement; and the risks of human vulnerability, with a particular focus on children. NCDP carries out research that helps us prepare for, respond to, and recover from large-scale disasters — including hurricanes, earthquakes, nuclear accidents, pandemic flu, and terrorist attacks. NCDP’s approach combines research, policy work, education, and high level advocacy to ensure that the best thinking—and best practices—become part of our national disaster preparedness and recovery work.