

# UNDERSTANDING THE PEDIATRIC SURGE CRISIS

**>75%**

As of early November, more than 3 in 4 pediatric inpatient beds in the U.S. were occupied.<sup>1</sup>

**>100%**

Many states have surpassed full capacity for staffed pediatric intensive care unit beds.<sup>1</sup>

**2-3X**

EDs are reporting pediatric volumes as high as 2-3X as normal.<sup>2,3,4</sup>



*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.<sup>5,6</sup>



**+11%**

Hospital expenses were 11% higher in 2021 than in 2019.<sup>7</sup>



**-19%**

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

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

**35%**

More than 1 in 3 clinicians report at least one symptom of burnout.<sup>9</sup>



**23%**

of hospitals report a critical staffing shortage.<sup>10</sup>

### #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.<sup>11</sup>



**4X**

Low pediatric readiness in EDs is associated with a four-fold increase in mortality rate.<sup>12</sup>



**90%**

of American families do not have an ED closest to them that is considered pediatric ready.<sup>13</sup>

# Public Health Challenges

## #4: The growing pediatric mental health crisis

**+280%**

The suicide rate in children ages 5-12 **increased 280% from 1999-2018.**<sup>14</sup>



**68%**

of U.S. counties are designated as **mental health professional shortage areas.**<sup>15</sup>



**+6-10%**

Pediatric **utilization of EDs for mental health** has been increasing 6% to 10% *per year.*<sup>16</sup>

## #5: A tidal wave of respiratory illnesses

**+68%**

From October to December, the number of children with **COVID-19 at hospital admission** increased 68%.<sup>17</sup>



**+14%**

**Flu hospitalization** of young children reached nearly 14% in November 2022, the highest point for that period since 2009.<sup>18</sup>



**+300%**

**RSV hospitalization** among children in November 2022 was more than quadruple the rate a year earlier.<sup>19</sup>

**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.

For references, visit <https://bit.ly/surgefacts>.

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