



New York City Pediatric Disaster Coalition

NYC PEDIATRIC DISASTER COALITION
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In Loving Memory of Michael Frogel, MD, FAAP

Written by John Jermyn, Patricia Frost, and George Foltin

It is with great sadness and regret that the New York City Pediatric Disaster Coalition (NYCPDC) and National Pediatric Disaster Coalition (NPDC) announces the passing of our own Dr. Michael "Mike" Frogel following a recent severe illness. Mike was a force of nature leading the mission to improve the health and welfare of children his entire remarkable 50-year career, never slowing down, doing what he loved up until the end of his auspicious story.

Mike was a founding member of both the NYCPDC and NPDC. He honorably served the NYCPDC as a Co-Principal Investigator since the coalition's inception in 2008 and as the first Chairman of the NPDC from its establishment in 2015 up until his recent death. The mission of both coalitions is to prepare our city and communities around our nation for disasters impacting children and there was no greater example of a leader than Mike Frogel. Under Mike's leadership the NYCPDC has grown to include 28 hospitals, pediatric long-term care facilities, pediatric outpatient and urgent care centers, the New York City Fire Department/Bureau of Emergency Medical Services, New York City Emergency Management, New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, and the New York City Healthcare Coalition (NYCHCC) which includes all five borough coalitions, community-based organizations, and a cohort of pediatric subject matter experts.

Over the years Mike developed various pediatric disaster planning and exercise guidelines, templates, and toolkits. He facilitated pediatric disaster planning implementation efforts at over 40 different NYC pediatric healthcare facilities utilizing these resources. This included the first ever created pediatric long-term care surge and evacuation guidelines and templates. In addition, Mike organized and conducted numerous discussion-based, full-scale and citywide surge and evacuation exercises to ensure these disaster plans were fully operationalized. Mike directed NYC's first ever obstetrics full-scale exercise and the largest pediatric exercise ever conducted consisting of 28 hospitals and three city agencies. Mike played a critical role in drafting the pending NYC Pediatric Disaster Plan, in modifying the pediatric triage algorithm in NYC and in forming the NYC Pediatric Intensivist Response Team (PIRT). PIRT ensures pediatric patients are appropriately prioritized for secondary transport in the event of a pediatric mass casualty incident overwhelming the city. His vision to establish a NYC Medical Operations Coordination Cell (MOCC) plan to include pediatrics will soon too be accomplished.

Mike was a proud member of the NYCHCC Governing Board, the NYC Pediatric Clinical Advisory Group, all five borough coalitions, the NYCHCC SurgeEx Planning and Steering

Committees and oversaw the development of the NYCHCC pediatric surge annex plan as well as the NYCHCC pediatric infectious disease and burn annexes.

Mike worked diligently to identify pediatric gaps and to recommend corrective actions with best practices matching resources to needs to improve the provision of pediatric care. Mike also worked tirelessly to address mental health issues in children. His extensive accomplishments with NYCPDC weren't limited to the planning phase. With Mike's guidance the NYCPDC provided response efforts to the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, 2010 Haitian Earthquake, Superstorm Sandy, COVID-19 and most notably the January 9, 2022 Bronx fire and the 2022 national pediatric infectious disease surge. These response efforts included: running a COVID-19 pediatric vaccine hesitancy webinar with nearly 900 registered participants from around the country; the first official activation of PIRT during the January 9, 2022 Bronx fire with successful coordination of interfacility pediatric patient transfer; and the rapid development of a webinar focused on current and future strategies to respond to the 2022 pediatric infectious disease surge across the U.S.

Mike's leadership was instrumental in the planning of the very first National Pediatric Disaster Conference (2015) which took place in Scottsdale, Arizona. During his NPDC tenure Mike was a steadfast advocate for the inclusion of children in disasters, providing a forum of information sharing and support for pediatric disaster novices and experts from across the U.S. and internationally to network with each other. He was proactive in ensuring that the needs of children in disasters were always part of the annual National Healthcare Coalition Preparedness Conference. Mike coordinated a yearly comprehensive course in Israel for physicians worldwide on emergency preparedness and disaster mental health. At his urging and with his leadership the Israeli Ministry of Health and Home Front Command have conducted major full-scale pediatric specific hospital drills.

Mike's contributions included books, publications, abstracts and presentations, leading and participating in local, state, national, and international conferences as well as being a subject matter expert for various entities including the National Advisory Committee on Children in Disasters and the New York State Ventilator Allocation Task Force. A highlight in recent years was Mike serving as a Senior Advisor to the ASPR Western Regional Alliance for Pediatric Emergency Management (WRAP-EM), Pediatric Center of Excellence.

Prior to his years with NYCPDC and NPDC Mike served a highly distinguished career as a pediatrician spanning well over four decades. The vast majority of his clinical career was at Schneider Children's Hospital/Long Island Jewish Medical Center (LIJ), now Cohen Children's Medical Center/Northwell Health. During his years at LIJ Mike established the Division of General Pediatrics, the Queens Child Protection Coalition and mentored countless students, residents and attendings. He was a true pioneer pediatric champion and disaster preparedness advocate from the beginning. Mike was an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, the same institution which he was a graduate of.

Mike was a dear friend, colleague, and mentor to many and the most passionate pediatric professional. Mike is remembered for his warm personality, his relentless work ethic and his ability to help people in time of need. Even the local concerned parent would occasionally come knocking on Dr. Frogel's door to seek care for their child and he would gladly help. Mike was uniquely qualified to speak truth to power and generously shared his extensive expertise and lived experience supporting a new generation of healthcare disaster leaders. Mike received

countless professional and community awards and recognition throughout his life. He dedicated his career to the improvement of the health of children and emerged as an early leader for pediatric disaster preparedness and over these last 16 years has earned a reputation as a national leader and a role model. However, it was never about humble Mike. It was always about doing the right thing for the good of the pediatric population every time. To his Co-Principal Investigator of the NYCPDC Mike was a caring, inspirational partner in crime for 16 years, to his staff he was a caring mentor.

Mike was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and in more recent time a great grandfather. His greatest pride was spending time with his family, especially during holidays and going on trips to Israel. Mike was a dedicated member of his community, his synagogue and was very proud of his Jewish heritage. Consistent with his faith and his cherished family time there, Mike's final resting place is in Israel at a cemetery outside of Jerusalem. Outside of work he enjoyed recreational sports including basketball and swimming. It's difficult to believe this written tribute is only a partial summary of Mike's incredible life and career. But if you could takeaway anything from it always remember Dr. Michael Frogel was a renown pediatric expert, a loyal friend and colleague, and a righteous man of the utmost values with tremendous compassion. He will forever be deeply missed by all of us. The world has lost a very special person. May he rest in peace and never be forgotten.

We ask you to please join us in keeping Mike, his family and colleagues in your thoughts and prayers. The NYCPDC in partnership with NPDC leadership is currently in the planning stages to formally honor the remarkable individual Mike was. It's our privilege to provide updates and additional information on this in the future. Thank you for your kindness and support during this difficult time and thank you Mike, we love and miss you!

Sincerely,

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