

Central-Arizona Coalition for Healthcare Emergency Response (AzCHER)

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LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

To: XXXX

CC: XXXX

Dear XXXX:

We are contacting you to inform you about a new healthcare coalition that is required by the federal Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) grant. For several years, Phoenix Children's Hospital has participated in the HPP grant, which is administered by the Arizona Department of Health Services through a contract with the federal Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response. As a valued member of the emergency preparedness and response community, representatives of XXXX have participated in numerous regional exercises and held membership on regional organizations and/or committees devoted to improving our community's emergency response efforts.

One of the key emergency preparedness organizations that hospitals in central Arizona have participated in is the Maricopa County Hospital Disaster Preparedness Council (MCHDPC). The MCHDPC, in association with the Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association, was responsible for drafting the original disaster Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that Maricopa County hospitals have signed. In order to further integrate regional preparedness and response efforts, improve communications between healthcare providers and public health during an actual emergency, and align the state's preparedness efforts with federal HPP requirements, the MCHDPC has changed its organizational structure and will be replaced by the newly formed Central Arizona Coalition for Healthcare Emergency Response (AzCHER-Central). For the first time, hospitals throughout central Arizona – Maricopa, Gila and Pinal Counties – will form an emergency response coalition with public health and important other stakeholders.

The organizational structure and membership of AzCHER-Central meets the new requirements of the federal HPP grant, and by merging the coalition with the existing MCHDPC, we will streamline our collaborative response efforts and eliminate duplicative activities. One of the first activities of AzCHER-Central is to update the existing disaster MOU. We expect to complete the update later this year, and will reach out to hospital executives from Maricopa, Pinal and Gila County to sign. Attached you will find an overview of AzCHER-Central, including an organizational chart. We look forward to working with your organization in the months ahead. If you or your staff has any questions about AzCHER-Central please feel free to contact one of us.

Regards,

Handwritten signature of Alisa Diggs in black ink.

Alisa Diggs, PA-c, MPH
AzCHER Co-Chair

Handwritten signature of Beth Heinrich in black ink.

Beth Heinrich, RN
AzCHER Co-Chair