

June 15th, 2020

Announcement: NCDP to Transition Leadership Effective July 1, 2020

On July 1, 2020 Irwin Redlener, M.D. founder and director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness (NCDP) at Columbia University's Earth Institute will be stepping down as director. He will be succeeded by the center's current deputy director, Jeff Schlegelmilch. After this transition, Dr. Redlener will continue to be a major part of NCDP's efforts, leading programs focused on pandemic preparedness and children in crisis as a Senior Research Scholar, and as director of the new Pandemic Response and Resource Initiative based at NCDP. He will retain his Columbia faculty appointments as professor of pediatrics and health policy and management at the Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons and Mailman School of Public Health, respectively. Dr. Redlener is president emeritus and co-founder of Children's Health Fund and developer of the Children's Hospital at Montefiore.

A lifelong public health professional, children's advocate, and author, Dr. Redlener founded NCDP in 2003 at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health which then transitioned to become a member of Columbia University's Earth Institute in 2013. The center instantly became a vital hub of research, policy, and practice focused on ensuring that the best science and the best thinking is impacting today's challenges in disaster management, with a special interest in the impact of disasters on children.



Jeff Schlegelmilch has been the deputy director of NCDP since 2015, and has led projects focused on public health preparedness, integration of the private sector into disaster resilience, and is the principal investigator of the multi-award-winning Resilient Children/Resilient Communities (RCRC) Initiative. He previously worked as the manager for International and Non-Healthcare Sectors the Yale New Haven Health System Center for Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response, and before that was a public health preparedness planner and an epidemiologist for the Boston Public Health Commission.

Since its founding the center has had over 150 reports and peer reviewed publications, trained over 100,000 learners in over 40 countries, served in numerous advisory roles to government and non-government organizations, and been a trusted voice for the media on issues related to disasters. The center has led consensus conferences on pediatric responses to acts of bioterrorism, held workshops on large-scale nuclear planning, conducted national polls on preparedness attitudes and opinions and fielded first of its kind research into the long-term impacts of disasters on children and families after such disasters as Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy.

“Jeff Schlegelmilch has become a nationally- known, go-to expert in disaster planning and response and is one of the most effective and thoughtful leaders I have ever had the pleasure of working with. I am beyond confident that Jeff will lead NCDP to new heights and accomplishments,” said Dr. Redlener. “It is an honor to take the helm of this tremendous institution that Dr. Redlener has built,” said incoming director, Jeff Schlegelmilch. “With COVID-19, the climate crisis and so many challenges ahead of us as a society, the National Center for Disaster Preparedness’ mission is more important than it has ever been. I am grateful that I am able to continue to work on these challenges with such a dedicated team of world-class scholars and practitioners at the center.”

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About the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University’s Earth Institute: The National Center for Disaster Preparedness at the Earth Institute of 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 focus on children. The Pandemic Resource and Response Initiative is a new program of the NCDP at Columbia University’s Earth Institute.

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