

LT. GEN. DARDIS

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND DISASTERS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2010 at 11:45 a.m.

- Good morning. It is my pleasure to be here today to share Iowa's response and recovery story with the National Commission on Children and Disasters.
- We want to thank the Commission for taking the time to come to Iowa to learn more about how disasters impact children, especially those here in Iowa.
- Since the start of Iowa's long-term recovery from the floods and tornadoes of 2008, the goal has remained constant -- to rebuild safer, stronger and smarter.

- That goal extends to better meeting the needs of ALL people -- ALL groups of ALL ages affected by disasters.
- As we continue this recovery operation, we must look at programs and services that not only benefit adults, but children and families as well, and evaluate what has worked well and what challenges remain.
- When dealing with disasters, one must take a holistic view -- the areas of housing, infrastructure, mental health, business and welfare all affect how a child recovers in a community after a disaster strikes.

- For example, losing a house affects a family's safety and health; when a parent loses a job – it can impact housing and day care; losing a day care to a disaster can affect a parents' ability to work; stress from housing repairs or relocating can affect one's mental health... the cause and effects go on and on.
- By bringing together stakeholders at the local, state and federal level who have an interest in the welfare of children --- we can best address the needs of this very special population.
- Iowa has many accomplishments to share in this area, as well as lessons learned through

our continued recovery. By sharing our story, this information can potentially reform policies at a national level and benefit the nation as a whole.

- Once again, we want to thank the Commission for coming to Iowa and look forward to their report to President Obama and the White House in April.
- Thank you.