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On the Panel



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About Us

The Special Populations Acceleration, Research and Knowledge (SPARK) for Innovations in Pediatrics, a [BARDA Accelerator Network hub](#), focused on supporting the development and availability of medical countermeasures (MCM) for [pediatric populations](#) facing chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear (CBRN) threats, pandemic influenza, and emerging infectious diseases.

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About BARDA

Mission: to develop medical countermeasures that address the public health and medical consequences of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) accidents, incidents and attacks, pandemic influenza, and emerging infectious diseases



BARDA Accelerator Network



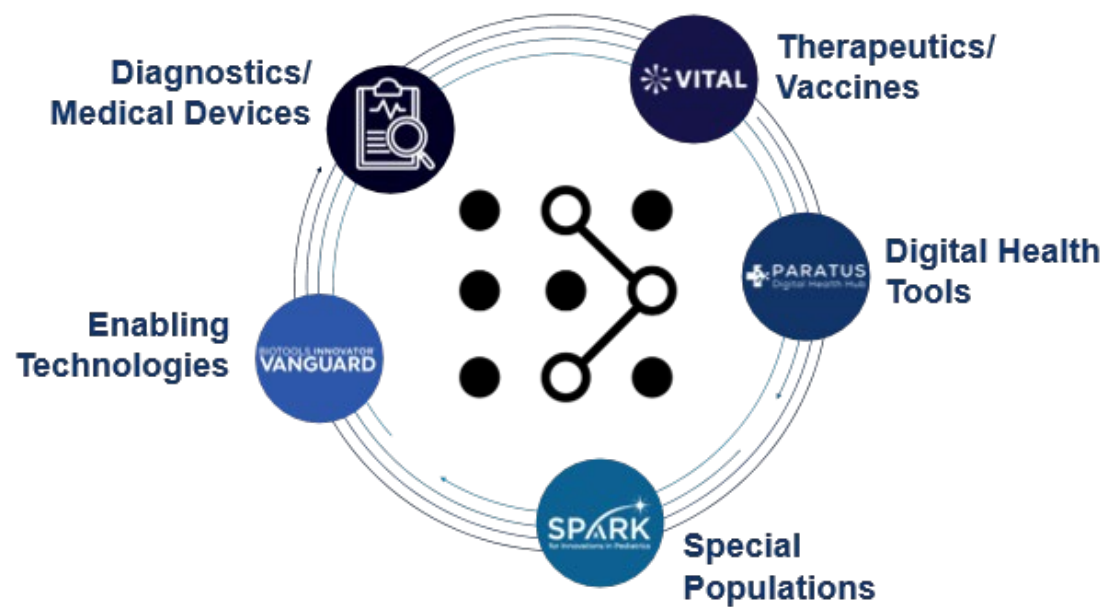
Accelerator Programs



Non-Dilutive Funding



Rapid Response Capability



Why a Pediatric Focus is Critical

Children are highly vulnerable in public health emergencies yet there are critical gaps in current MCMs

Current Gaps

- 40% of MCMs in strategic national stockpiles have no pediatric indications.
- Many lack pediatric dosing data and safety.
- Pediatric formulations are costly and hard to store.
- Ethical protections and consent requirements limit clinical trials and increase development costs.

What It Takes

- Include pediatric formulations and dosing in national stockpiles.
- Base dosing on pediatric research, not adult data.
- Ensure ethical inclusion in life-saving studies.
- Build strong partnerships across public and private sectors to prioritize pediatric health security.

Protecting children strengthens nation's health security

The SPARK Hub Partnerships

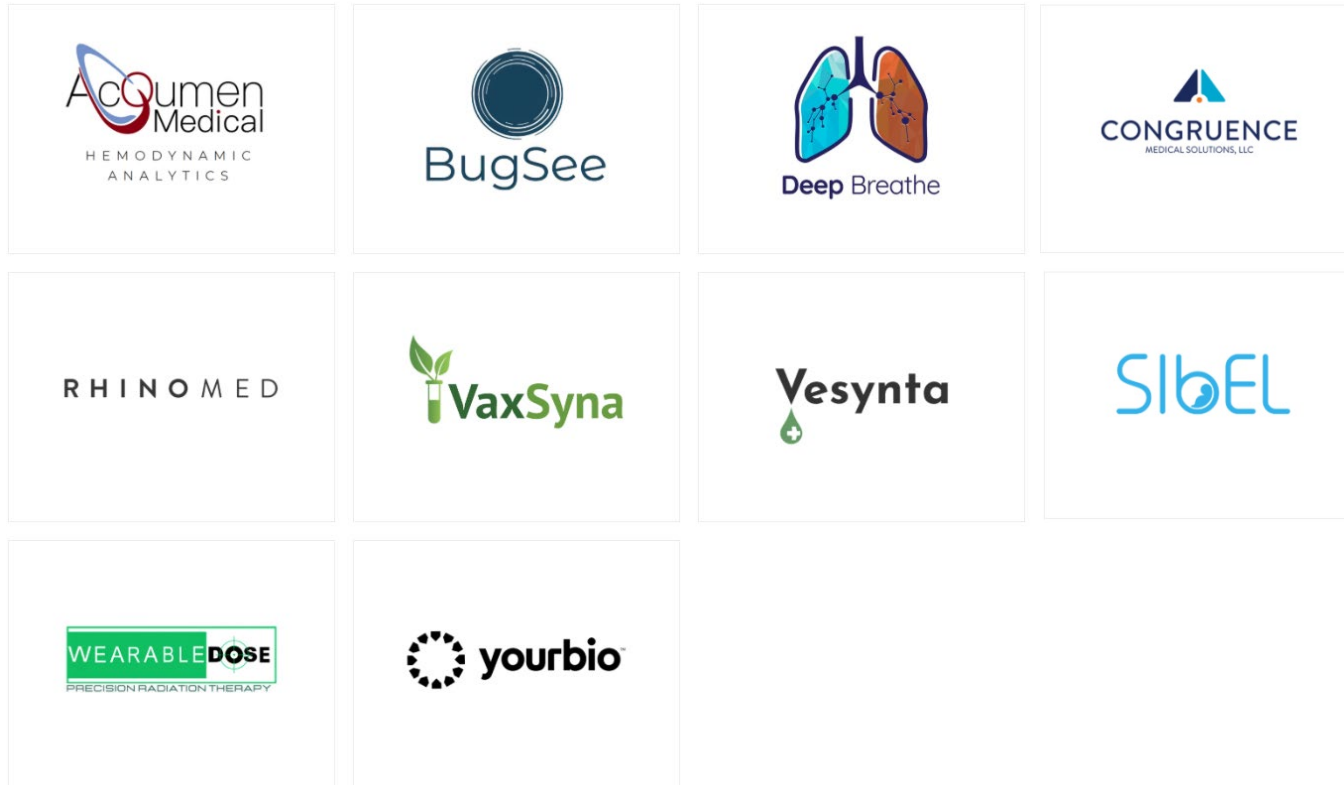
The SPARK hub team at Children's National, along with its partners, has a long history of pediatrics-focused innovation and commercialization programs.



Let's drive innovation together
for the most vulnerable among
us —

our children.

SPARK Portfolio 2025



Highlights

Devices: Child-friendly, non-invasive, pain-free wearable monitors, nasal swabs, microneedle blood collection

Diagnostics: Rapid bacterial infection detection, and pediatrics-focused AI-powered lung ultrasound interpretation

Digital Health: Data-driven precision dosing platforms

Vaccines/Therapeutics: Modular antibody–antigen fusion vaccines with multivalent display

Enabling Technologies: Pediatric-specific drug delivery for radiation emergencies

Annual Opportunities

SPARK Hub for Pediatric Innovations provides Wraparound Accelerator Services (WAS) and funding for Development, Evaluation, and Validation (DEV) of pediatric-focused MCM innovations. These services are tailored to support MCM innovators through each phase of development, from ideation to FDA-regulated product validation.

DEV FUNDING OPPORTUNITY 2026

Up to \$200,000 in non-dilutive funding for development, evaluation, and validation of pediatric-focused medical countermeasures

ACCELERATOR PROGRAM 2026

A zero-cost needs-based, advisory and mentorship program for startups developing pediatric health security solutions

Open Opportunity

Up to **\$50,000** in non-dilutive prize funding for innovative pediatric health security solutions.
Finalists pitch live at the SPARK Pediatric Medical Countermeasures Summit in Washington DC on September 22, 2026.



The banner features the SPARK logo on the left, which includes a stylized star and the text "SPARK for Innovations in Pediatrics" and "www.mcm4kids.org". To the right of the logo, the text "Pediatric Medical Countermeasures Summit 2026" is displayed in large, bold letters, with "SEPTEMBER 22, 2026 | WASHINGTON, DC" below it. A green button with the text "PRIZE COMPETITION" is positioned at the bottom right of the banner.

SPARK
for Innovations in Pediatrics
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**Pediatric
Medical Countermeasures
Summit 2026**
SEPTEMBER 22, 2026 | WASHINGTON, DC

PRIZE COMPETITION

Why Apply

- **Up to \$50,000 in Non-Dilutive Funding:** Compete for a share of \$50,000 in prize funding, with up to three winners selected.
- **Pitch Opportunity at SPARK Summit:** Finalists are invited to present live at the SPARK Pediatric Medical Countermeasures Summit in Washington, DC.
- **Travel Support for Finalists:** Eligible non-local finalists may receive a fixed travel stipend.
- **Exposure to Key Stakeholders:** Pitch your innovation to pediatric clinicians, BARDA stakeholders, industry leaders, and potential partners.
- **BARDA Alignment and Positioning:** Position your solution within BARDA mission areas and pediatric MCM priorities, helping strengthen future engagement readiness.

Focus Areas

- **Diagnostics, medical devices, digital tools, therapeutics, vaccines, and enabling technologies** to address BARDA mission-relevant health security threats in pediatric populations.
- **Enabling technologies** that facilitate evidence generation for the expansion of pediatric labeling of a specified BARDA mission-relevant medical countermeasure (MCM). Some examples of such technologies include, but are not limited to:
 - *Pediatric digital twins to predict the safety and efficacy of therapeutics and vaccines*
 - *Microphysiological systems, including organoids, assembloids, and organ-on-a-chip platforms, that can simulate pediatric systems to better evaluate therapeutic candidates*
 - *PK/PD models for pediatric dose optimization*
 - *Simulation platforms for clinical trial design and pediatric response forecasting*

PHEMCE
Priority Threats



In-Scope

- MCM developers (diagnostics, medical devices, digital tools, therapeutics, vaccines, enabling technologies) with a named candidate addressing a PHEMCE-priority threat.
- MCM developer-led teams partnering with Enabling Technologies providers to test and validate their MCMs.
- Submissions that articulate a specific FDA regulatory pathway and submission type that the generated evidence will support (e.g., pediatric label extension, age-down extrapolation, dose justification, biomarker qualification via FDA-defined Drug Development Tool (DDT)).
- Use of one or more non-traditional methods (MPS, PBPK/QSP, digital twins, in silico trial design) with a fit-for-purpose pediatric credibility/validation plan.

Out-of-Scope

- Tool, platform, or model development without a named MCM candidate.
- Adult-only modeling, dosing, or trial-design work with no pediatric extension plan.
- Basic research, target discovery, or programs without a defined development candidate.
- Programs whose end deliverable is a publication or a tool release rather than a regulatory submission supporting an on-label pediatric indication.
- Programs focused on genetic, rare, or chronic diseases.

Eligibility*

- Academic innovators and companies developing technologies aimed at improving health security for pediatric populations.
- Proposals should align with BARDA's mission and demonstrate strong pediatrics focus.
- Funding opportunity is open to both U.S. and non-U.S. entities that meet the eligibility criteria.
- All technology readiness level (TRL) will be considered.
- Applicants may apply to multiple BARDA/SPARK solicitations, provided each submission meets the specific criteria and scope. Applications will be reviewed independently.
- Current BARDA/SPARK portfolio participants are encouraged to apply, as long as proposed projects are distinct and aligned with solicitation requirements.

**subject to the terms and conditions in effect at the time of award notice.*

Application Overview

1. **Applicant and Organization Information**
2. **Executive Summary (250-words limit):** Overview of Solution and Impact
3. **Proposal Abstract (1000-words limit):** Problem and Solution; Technical Approach and Status; Innovation and Competitive Advantage; Risks and Mitigation; Path to Commercialization; Intellectual Property
4. **Pitch Deck:** Problem and Solution; Alignment with BARDA Priorities; Pediatric Use Case and Value Proposition; Competitive Advantage; Market Opportunity; IP and Regulatory Strategy; Team Overview; Business Development Strategy; Development Timeline and Capital Needs

Key Tips for Applicants

Be explicit on BARDA relevance and pediatric impact

Clearly specify the medical countermeasure developed, tested or validated

Specify use in emergency, disaster, or surge scenarios

Evaluation Criteria

- Alignment with Specified BARDA Priorities
- Value for Pediatric Populations
- Innovation and Differentiation
- Technical Expertise and Capability
- Regulatory Knowledge and Readiness

Key Dates

- Submission Deadline – July 22, 2026
- Finalists Notified – August 22, 2026
- Prize Competition Held – September 22, 2026

Apply Now



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Get In Touch



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