



# News Release

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Winning applications from HHS Facebook challenge go live**

*New applications support personal preparedness for hurricanes and other emergencies*

Two new free personal preparedness applications go live on Facebook today, as hurricane season begins, to help people support each other during an emergency and become better prepared by identifying lifelines. Lifelines are Facebook friends a user can count on, and who agree to check on them in an emergency, supply them with shelter, food, or other necessities, or provide the user's social network with an update about their situation.

"After disasters, a tremendous number of people use Facebook to post and share information, so developing a Facebook app that would help people establish social connections they'll need in an emergency seemed like a natural way to enhance community and individual resilience," explained Dr. Nicole Lurie, assistant secretary for preparedness and response, Health and Human Services, and a rear admiral in the U.S. Public Health Service.

The two apps, bReddi and Project: Lifeline, do more than allow users to identify lifelines. They also let users create and share personal preparedness plans, and track the status of their Facebook friends in disaster-affected areas. Both apps achieve the goals of helping families and friends to plan more easily, being better prepared when a disaster strikes, and more reliably and efficiently getting the word out about each others' health and safety.

This capability means people can more easily learn whether their loved ones are safe, helping the people affected by the disaster and those searching for missing people. The apps also allow users to print cards with a snapshots of their preparedness plans to carry in their wallets as quick references about what to do when a disaster strikes.

Both apps can be accessed through the ASPR website [www.phe.gov/lifeline/](http://www.phe.gov/lifeline/) or directly through Facebook.

"The question is, who can you count on in an emergency and who can count on you?" Dr. Lurie said. "We know that people who have friends or relatives they can rely on for help are healthier

and live longer than those who don't, and that every disaster has the potential to impact health, so having people you can depend on for help is especially important during a disaster. That's why we are encouraging everyone to identify their lifelines in advance."

These apps were winners of a challenge sponsored by the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR). It was the first challenge for a Facebook application to be sponsored by the department.

After a thorough search of Facebook revealed a lack of personal preparedness apps, ASPR issued the Facebook Lifeline Application Challenge to bridge the gap. The challenge called on software application developers, entrepreneurs, social networking enthusiasts, members of the public health and emergency response communities to design new Facebook applications that would support individual and community resilience.

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