

# U.S. Children's Hospitals

## CLINICAL CARE

Children's hospitals are the most specialized and regionalized centers of care for children in the United States. They provide the majority of highly specialized inpatient care for children with complex and rare medical conditions. Children's hospitals and major teaching hospitals together treat 98 percent of all children needing heart or lung transplants, 93 percent of all children requiring cardiac surgery and 86 percent of all children requiring surgical treatment for cancer.

Of the 250 hospitals dedicated to the care of children, only 50 are free-standing children's hospitals. Every major city in the U.S. has a free-standing children's hospital, with the exception of San Antonio.

With the most technologically advanced facilities and top specialists 100 percent focused on the unique needs of children, children's hospitals serve as regional referral centers for all aspects of pediatric care. Children who receive care from children's hospitals span all ages, economic backgrounds and racial and ethnic minority groups.

## EDUCATION

While few in number, the 50 free-standing children's hospitals in the U.S. train 35 percent of all pediatricians and nearly 50 percent of pediatric specialists. Factor in pediatric departments of major teaching hospitals, and children's hospitals train the large majority of pediatricians and virtually every pediatric subspecialist.

Children's hospitals also train nurses, occupational therapists, social workers, dentists and other health professionals who dedicate their careers to working to improve the health of children.

## RESEARCH

Almost all children's hospitals participate in pediatric research or clinical trials. Pediatric health research has led to landmark discoveries, from shrinking tumors to treating cancer, to preventing common childhood diseases such as polio. Children's hospitals have led the way in fetal surgery, treatment of compromised immune systems, bone marrow transplants and treatment of birth defects like spina bifida and congenital heart anomalies. As cutting-edge institutions, child health research centers bring researchers to the patients' bedsides so clinical care improvements can move more rapidly than at ordinary hospitals.

## ADVOCACY

Each day more than 39,000 children will sustain an injury serious enough to require medical attention, missed school and/or bed rest. Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 14.

A core part of children's hospitals' mission is to lead efforts to prevent intentional and unintentional injuries in their communities. Children's hospitals partner with schools and businesses to educate parents and families about child passenger safety, bicycle helmet safety and child abuse prevention, among other subjects.

Eighty-seven percent of children's hospitals provide injury prevention activities in child passenger safety; 78 percent provide education on child abuse prevention and child protection.

## PHILANTHROPY

Nearly all children's hospitals are not-for-profit corporations, which draw their governing boards from all segments of their communities. Because children's hospitals provide care to all children, regardless of ability to pay, philanthropic support plays an important role in children's hospitals' financing.

Children's hospitals seek and receive grants and donations from individuals, the federal government and private foundations. They depend on these funds to support the many programs and services not reimbursed by private or public health insurance or other revenue sources.

# State of Pediatric Care

## SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Children's hospitals bring remarkable caregivers to children. They include specialized nurses, child life specialists, and pediatric medical and surgical subspecialist physicians, which are in short supply.

San Antonio has critical shortages of all pediatric caregivers, including subspecialty physicians such as gastroenterologists, radiologists, pediatric emergency medicine specialists, pulmonologists, cardiologists and neonatologists, just to name a few.

### RECENT LOSSES & RECRUITMENT OBSTACLES

In the past two years, the San Antonio community has lost critical pediatric subspecialists to free-standing children's hospitals in Austin, Denver, Kansas City, Knoxville and Memphis. The close proximity of other free-standing children's hospitals in Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin and Houston make recruitment of new subspecialists more difficult. Pediatric subspecialists want to practice in the best environment available — a free-standing children's hospital being the first choice.

### CHILDRENS SERVICES IN SAN ANTONIO

Although four health systems provide high-level subspecialty pediatric services in San Antonio, none are full-service. Because no full-service children's hospital is available locally, it is common for children with complex diseases to receive treatment at multiple institutions. This increases the cost of care and the chance of miscommunication, medical errors or duplicate tests and treatments.

There is no common electronic health record (EHR) connecting the four health systems in San Antonio. The EHR is a valuable tool to assure quality of care for children. It would allow for one medical record for each hospitalized child in San Antonio that could be accessible by caregivers and parents. This would make it easier to track vaccinations, previous inpatient or outpatient visits and the treatments received.

San Antonio is the only major city in Texas without a free-standing children's hospital. Dell Children's Hospital in Austin, combined with a new medical school, will cripple the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio's Department of Pediatrics — the source of most new pediatricians in the San Antonio community.

Fragmented care doesn't effectively utilize resources like nurses, therapists and physicians. Numerous studies have indicated that centers with higher volumes of procedures like heart surgery have better outcomes. It is not only an issue of cost but also of quality. We all want our children who are sick or injured to have the highest quality care available in the region.

San Antonio needs a full-service, free-standing children's hospital.