Keeping our Promise to improve the health of children

Cook Children’s created The Center for Children’s Health in 2011 to help fulfill its Promise to improve the health of every child in our region. The center provides a unique opportunity and an infrastructure to “work upstream” with families and community partners to prevent unnecessary illnesses, diseases and injuries. The center conducts a Community-wide Children’s Health Assessment & Planning Survey (CCHAPS) every three years to identify the health needs of children in our six-county service area (Denton, Hood, Johnson, Parker, Tarrant and Wise). Based on the survey results, Cook Children’s Board of Trustees prioritized seven health issues to address: asthma, childhood obesity, access to health care, mental health, oral health, unintentional injuries and child maltreatment.

The data collected through CCHAPS is used for additional research to understand and communicate in greater detail about each issue. Community engagement is a key strategy for building local and regional community capacity to implement solutions to address the priority issues. Alignment and integration of clinical and community-based actions are accomplished through engagement of our physicians. The implementation strategies are a part of Cook Children’s annual strategic plan. Collectively, these strategies are known as “Healthy Children 2020” to help ensure that every child in our service area has the opportunity to be healthy and thrive.

The Center for Children’s Health strives to be a good steward of:

- Children’s health data
- Children’s health research
- Children’s health outreach
- Children’s health collaborations

The Center for Children’s Health

Cook Children’s Promise – “Knowing that every child’s life is sacred, it is the Promise of Cook Children’s to improve the health of every child in our region through the prevention and treatment of illness, disease and injury.”

Benefiting our community by improving children’s health

centerforchildrenshealth.org

Cook Children’s
Community-wide Children’s Health Assessment & Planning Survey (CCHAPS)

Cook Children’s completes the CCHAPS every three years. Survey results were reported in 2009, 2012 and 2015. Findings will be reported in October 2015. This descriptive data, made up of a representative sample of the population ages 0-14 in our six-county region, is crucial to understanding more fully the health status of children. The surveys yield rich information for each of the seven prioritized health issues.

The center provides the CCHAPS data for the benefit of the community and actively works to inform the community that the data is available on its website for review and use. The user can compare the data by county, by some cities within the region, by child’s age, gender and/or race, by level of parent education and by household income.

Community Health Research

CCHAPS data is also used to research, understand and communicate children’s health issues and potential solutions beyond a one-time report. The data is used to:
- Provide resources to continually investigate and learn about children’s health
- Resource topical briefs, white papers and professional journal articles.
- Provide a working relationship with four academic institutions, which gives master's and doctoral level students the opportunity to further mine the data yielding valuable research on highly focused aspects of the health issues addressed in CCHAPS.

Physician Engagement

The center actively promotes ways to engage health care providers in community level activities. A medical director provides clinical expertise to the center’s team. Personal visits are made to physicians in the outlying counties to inform them of local community outreach efforts facilitated by the center. Education about the center’s efforts is provided to all physicians in Cook Children’s Physician Network. The presentations also allow the center to provide health resources that can be used in the community to support the physicians’ work and align health messages given to children and families. Healthy Children 2020 metrics for Cook Children’s were developed through a committee process with the help of recruited physicians. Opportunities for medical students to observe the work of the center are sought out and arranged by the center’s medical director.

The Center for Prevention of Child Maltreatment

In 2014, the Cook Children’s Health Foundation Board of Trustees responded to a proposal to develop a comprehensive approach to the prevention of child maltreatment. Funding provided the basis for The Center for Prevention of Child Maltreatment, which operates under the auspices of The Center for Children’s Health. Child maltreatment is an all-encompassing term that describes a wide range of behaviors and risk factors related to abuse. An early achievement has been the development of an online, evidence-based, interactive training program that teaches clinicians how to recognize the early signs of child maltreatment. Current work includes pinpointing high-risk ZIP codes where child maltreatment may occur, collaborating with community partners to identify resourcing capacity and working with elected and appointed officials to identify public policy changes.

Community Health Outreach

Community Health Outreach (CHO) facilitates community-based prevention and intervention services that are data-driven and evidence-informed/based. A multi-layered approach, as outlined by the Prevention Institute is reflected in this work. Outreach to targeted groups may be comprised of health promotion, health protection or health services. Strategies include community education, leadership and/or support of health coalitions and partnerships, engagement of providers and professionals and efforts to influence organizational and public policy. Members of the CHO-led coalitions and partnerships represent diverse stakeholders. A guiding principle is to convey that any efforts to improve children’s health must be IN the community, FOR the community and BY the community.

CHO-facilitated coalitions and collaborations and their focus areas include:
- Children’s Oral Health Coalition (Tarrant County)
- Cook Children’s Homeless Initiative (Tarrant County)
- Healthy Children Coalition for Parker County – prevention of childhood obesity
- Hood County for Healthy Children – child abuse prevention
- Johnson County Alliance for Healthy Kids – child abuse prevention
- Safe Kids Tarrant County – injury prevention
- Save a Smile (Tarrant County)
- Wellness Alliance for Total Children’s Health of Denton County – mental health
- Wise Coalition for Healthy Children ( Wise County) – child abuse prevention