



A N O P E N L E T T E R *from* C A P E F E A R V A L L E Y H E A L T H :: *part 12 in a series*

this is YOUR HOSPITAL... **a FOCUS on CHILDREN**

In the 1980s, Cape Fear Valley was transforming itself from a community hospital to a regional referral center. At that time, the Board of Trustees and leadership made the important decision to add a Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) to complement the health system's existing children's services.

Neonatal intensive care is a big investment in technology and people. NICU babies are among the tiniest and most vulnerable, often needing hospitalization for two months or more. Our Level III NICU is the highest level available and is staffed by specialized nurses with 24/7 medical oversight by neonatal nurse practitioners and neonatologists. Reimbursement levels often fail to match the cost of caring for these babies.

However, in a community where children under age 18 make up more than a quarter of the population, Cape Fear Valley's leadership felt that children should be a priority. It's this focus on Children's Services that also led to the opening of Cape Fear Valley's Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) and Pediatric Emergency Department.

For more than a decade, the PICU operated out of a small space in the Children's Center south wing at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center. It was little more than a patient bay with curtains for patient privacy.

Today, the PICU is one of the most attractive and modern in our health system, thanks to a recent major renovation. The renovations include seven private patient rooms and a new nurses station, allowing the unit to take up the entire north wing of the Children's Center.

Physicians who care for the children on the unit are specially trained in pediatric critical care medicine. Efrain Sanchez-Rivera, M.D., has worked in the PICU since 2006. He says the unit has always provided the same level of care other top-notch PICU facilities provide. But he and his colleagues now have a top-level facility in which to provide that care.

The emphasis on children's services brought a wide range of children's specialists and subspecialists, including pediatric cardiology, child abuse, critical care, dentistry, emergency medicine, endocrinology, infectious disease, neurology and orthopedics.

In a county with more than 84,000 children, it's logical for Cape Fear Valley to be the region's leader in children's services. Our mission is "providing exceptional healthcare for all our patients" – including the youngest and most vulnerable among us.

Mike Nagowski
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Chris Aul, M.D., Family Physician
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER



CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH



Cape Fear Valley has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval™

CAPE FEAR VALLEY'S 92 Pediatric Physicians encompass a wide range of specialties and subspecialties, including:

- ▶ Pediatric Cardiology
- ▶ Pediatric Child Abuse
- ▶ Pediatric Critical Care
- ▶ Pediatric Dentistry
- ▶ Pediatric Emergency Medicine
- ▶ Pediatric Endocrinology
- ▶ Pediatric Infectious disease
- ▶ Pediatric Neurology
- ▶ Pediatric Orthopedics
- ▶ Pediatrics



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