## OUR KIDS



2022 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT VOLUME 5 | ISSUE 1









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# DE OBLESSLY GOOD



This belief, expressed by Carolyn Peck, one of our five founding mothers, in the late 1940s was one of the inspirations behind the quest to build a children's hospital in the rich farmland of the Central Valley of California.

Their belief in the goodness of people - and in the possibilities for kids - encouraged our five founding mothers to set their sights on building a hospital just for children living far (given the methods of transportation and roads of the time) from San Francisco or Los Angeles. They set out to achieve that goal - undaunted by skeptics, critics, challenges and roadblocks - and, in 1952, Valley Children's Hospital and Guidance Clinic opened in Fresno, a 42-bed hospital on a small corner lot surrounded by fruit trees and a few farmhouses.

This annual impact report is a tribute to our 70th anniversary and, more importantly, it is testament to the values that our founding mothers instilled in this organization from those early days.

Those values - their values and our values for seven decades - are present in our work every day. As we have learned to respond to COVID-19 and its impact on our patients, families, staff and organization, we have had to, more times than we would like to

count, dig deep to those core values that drive each of us who do this sacred work of caring for children. On more than one occasion, I was incredibly glad that our organization had that rich history, long-held values and unwavering commitment by and to the community to lift us all up over these last few years. The history of Valley Children's - and our commitment to excellence today - allowed us to encourage staff, reassure the community and, most importantly, to deliver exceptional care to our patients and families.

We have had our share of struggles. But we also had our share of successes: better quality outcomes than previous years, national recognitions of our work for kids, new service lines, innovations, research breakthroughs, community impacts and more.

It is easy for us to trace the straight line between our five founding mothers and their core values, love for children and for this organization to the stories and successes that we are honored to share in these pages.

The goodness of people is indeed present here.

Todd A. Suntrapak

President & CEO

# ENDURANCE COMPASSION EXCEPTIONAL CARE PERSEVERANCE INNOVATION



# THE STATE OF OUR CHILD BEN

Valley Children's
Healthcare is guided
by our mission to
continuously improve
the health and wellbeing of children.

With that commitment in mind, in 2022, Valley Children's Healthcare and the Guilds Center for Community Health continued to track and trend our annual list of the most critical issues adversely impacting child health and well-being in our region. These issues do not exist in their own "silos," but rather are interconnected and often interdependent. With our community partners, we continue to understand and equitably address these issues and measure our progress.

## TOP 10 ISSUES FACING OUR KIDS

### **ACCESS TO CARE**

Continuous healthcare access is essential for children. In the Central Valley, many children miss out on critical physical and mental health services due to inadequate resources and are often sicker by the time their families are able to access care.



### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: TELEMEDICINE

Valley Children's continues to use telemedicine as a means for enhancing access for patients and families, and in the process minimizing travel and reducing missed time at school and work. In 2022, Valley Children's secured a \$40,000 grant that is being used to support the development of an action plan to improve access to reliable, affordable internet service in the Central Valley.

## **ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)**

Childhood adversity - such as child abuse, exposure to violence, family alcohol or drug abuse and poverty - can have negative, long-term impacts on health and well-being.1 Challenges children face in school, life and ultimately with their health, are often the symptoms of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and toxic stress. In our region, ACEs affect almost 20% of children - increasing their risk for long-term health and behavioral issues.

### WHAT ARE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)?

### THE THREE TYPES OF ACES INCLUDE





Physical



Emotional



## NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional





HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION

Incarcerated

Substance

Divorce

**ASTHMA** 

Asthma is the most common chronic condition among children. It is also one of the leading causes of school absenteeism. In Kings and Tulare counties, around onethird of children have been diagnosed with asthma. Low-income populations, minorities and children living in underserved communities experience more emergency department visits, hospitalizations and deaths due to asthma than the general population.2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Preventing adverse childhood experiences. Retrieved from: https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/ aces/fastfact.html

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> American Lung Association, Asthma Trends and Burden.

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## **CHILD ABUSE**

Child abuse can cause serious physical injuries and even death, and can lead to lifelong physical, emotional and behavioral problems, which can impact families across generations. Children who are abused or neglected are more likely to have problems such as anxiety, depression, delinquency and difficulty in school. Kern and Stanislaus counties have the highest rates of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect in the region, much higher than the California state average. It is important to remember that child abuse and neglect are preventable.

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## **FOOD INSECURITY**

Approximately one in four Central Valley children is food insecure and lives in a household with limited or uncertain access to adequate food.

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: KIDS EAT SMART

In 2022, Valley Children's and the Guilds Center for Community Health continued its partnership with Vallarta Supermarkets and, with recent funding from Save Mart and Rite Aid, Valley Children's is working to expand this program into additional communities.

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## **CHILDHOOD OBESITY**

In recent decades, the national childhood obesity rate has more than tripled, with persistent disparities by race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status.<sup>3</sup> This is a troubling trend and a reality for the Central Valley; across our 12-county region, almost half (45%) of all fifth graders are overweight or obese. Compared with children at a healthy weight, children with obesity are at higher risk for a range of health problems, including asthma, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and Type 2 diabetes; they also are more likely to become obese as adults.<sup>4</sup>

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: SCHOOLS FOR HEALTHY AND THRIVING STUDENTS

In 2022, Valley Children's and the Guilds Center for Community Health, in partnership with the Center for Wellness and Nutrition and No Kid Hungry, launched Phase II of Schools for Healthy and Thriving Students, which looks at school wellness policies using the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child framework (WSCC). The WSCC model is student-centered and emphasizes the role of the community in supporting the school, the connections between health and academic achievement and the importance of evidence-based school policies and practices.

• In partnership with 18 school districts from Fresno and Madera counties – representing more than 180,000 students – school districts are in the process of updating their local school wellness policies, with six of these school districts successfully completing the process in Phase I.

## MATERNAL & INFANT HEALTH

Improving the well-being of mothers, infants and children is critical to the health of the next generation and impacts the overall health of communities. Unfortunately, Central Valley counties have some of the highest rates in California of babies born prematurely, babies born at low birth weight and infants who die before the age of 1. In addition, there are racial and ethnic disparities, with Black children dying at much higher rates than any other ethnicity.

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: CENTRAL VALLEY SAFE SLEEP COALITION

In 2022, the Guilds Center for Community Health continued to support the Central Valley Safe Sleep Coalition that represents more than 50 members in seven counties across the Central Valley. The Coalition - currently cochaired by Valley Children's and First 5 Fresno – has a vision that every parent and caregiver of an infant will have access to culturally appropriate risk reduction education and resources on infant sleep, keeping all Central Valley infants safe from preventable causes of death.

## COVID-19 VACCINE – FOR OUR YOUNGEST POPULATION

In June 2022, the FDA authorized COVID-19 vaccines for children 6 months of age and older. Valley Children's held community clinics for families, with Child Life specialists and pediatric nurses providing protection - and comfort - while protecting kids from serious effects of the virus.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Fryar, C. D., et al. (2020). Prevalence of overweight, obesity, and severe obesity among children and adolescents aged 2-19 years: United States, 1963-1965 through 2017-2018. National Center for Health Statistics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). Childhood obesity causes and consequences.

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### **MENTAL HEALTH**

Mental health is critical to overall health and well-being. Mental health in childhood means reaching developmental and emotional milestones, and learning healthy social skills and how to cope when there are problems. Counties in the Central Valley have some of the highest rates of students experiencing depression-related feelings; more than a third of ninth graders in Kern, Merced and Stanislaus counties reported having these feelings in the previous year.

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### **POVERTY**

Across California, approximately 1 in 5 children is living in poverty - but in the Central Valley, 1 in 3 children lives in poverty. Poverty is an important social determinant of health and contributes to child health disparities. Poverty and related social determinants of health can lead to adverse health outcomes in childhood and throughout a person's lifetime, negatively affecting physical health, socioemotional development and educational achievement.<sup>5</sup>

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### **UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES**

Unintentional injuries represent one of the leading causes of death in children nationally and in California. Within the Central Valley, Fresno County and Kern County have the highest number of children discharged from hospitals for non-fatal unintentional injuries.

## **COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS**

(The higher the number the worse the ranking)

County	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Fresno	51	50	48	46	45
Kern	52	52	52	53	53
Kings	33	30	32	33	32
Madera	40	36	38	36	37
Mariposa	34	42	44	30	31
Merced	45	47	39	38	38
Sacramento	31	29	28	26	26
San Joaquin	46	44	34	39	42
San Luis Obispo	13	15	14	16	13
Santa Barbara	18	19	19	18	19
Stanislaus	38	33	37	34	36
Tulare	50	51	53	47	47

Source: Health Outcomes Rank out of 58, 2018-2022 (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute)



## CUTTING-EDGE PRECISION MEDICINE

HELPS DETECT RARE DISEASES & GENETIC DISORDERS

Rapid genetic testing. Human-engineered (benign) viruses that can target disease-bearing genes.

These tools would have been out of a science fiction movie script only a decade ago, but today are the frontline resources doctors and genetic counselors are using at Valley Children's to quickly identify both rare and common diseases and help gameplan patient care.

"It means getting answers rapidly when you've got a critically ill child," said Dr. Jeremy Woods, director of Precision Medicine at Valley Children's Healthcare. "And then providing the precise treatments as soon as possible that the child needs to get better, based on their genetic test results."

To make the process even more seamless for providers, Dr. Woods developed a database of genetic sequences at Valley Children's using existing data of genome and phenome sequencing of the inpatient population to detect for gene sequences of genetic disorders.

"Using our data, we found that a rare biochemical genetic disorder called Zellweger syndrome was prevalent in a region with a high population of indigenous farmworkers from central Mexico," shared Dr. Woods. "What would have been a slowly detected pattern is now alerted to us by data mapping and we've been able to contact OB-GYNs in these areas to start getting screenings."

The quick and successful adoption of genetic medicine at Valley Children's has much to do with the network's participation in Project Baby Bear, a consortium of children's hospitals that were funded for a pilot program in 2018. Through this program, Valley Children's and its partner hospitals were able to apply rapid whole genome sequencing (rWGS) to patients. It's a process that sequences a person's entire genome. All told, 3.2 million pieces of information are collected and then interpreted with any variance relevant for clinical care within just a week.

The results were overwhelming: of 184 infants enrolled, 40% received a diagnosis by rWGS that explained their admission in a median time of three days, and for 32%, rWGS led to changes in medical care.

This success led the State of California to approve genetic medicine to be covered by Medi-Cal, the state's Medicaid program. And because it's a technology that helps replace long batteries of invasive and elimination-based testing, it helps improve the patient experience and clinical outcomes and, ultimately, lowers the cost of care.

Using genomic data can level the playing field when it comes to communities like ours that experience inequality and disparities in access to care." - Dr. Jeremy Woods, director of Precision Medicine

Genetic testing leverages a panel that can identify more than 500 conditions, whether ultra-rare or more commonly known diseases. It can even identify which pharmaceuticals could either be more effective or adverse in a patient.

That is why Genetic Counselor Jason Carmichael believes the best time to start is during prenatal care.

"In our pediatric genetics practice, we diagnosis children with genetic disorders due to clinical clues, family history or positive newborn screening that lead to further genetic testing. But the best thing now is the ability to screen for several disorders prenatally in the parents since the larger carrier screening panels now cover more than 500 disorders," said Carmichael. "People sometimes think you can't change things if you know prenatally, 'So what's the point?' But we are changing the narrative by emphasizing the benefits of obtaining genetic information prior to birth and its effects on optimizing postnatal care. We are trying to build a continuum of care between prenatal and postnatal care."

Carmichael said that mothers whose babies had a consequential disease diagnosis from a prenatal screening were better prepared - and processed through the grief process cycle - earlier than those whose babies were screened post-birth. Prenatal screening also means physicians can prepare a plan for post-birth treatment right away and both schedule and brief the necessary specialists ahead of time.

### FORWARD PROGRESS

There's more work to be done, though. Both Dr. Woods and Jason are committed to placing genetic counselors throughout the network with an emphasis in critical specialties like neurology, cardiology and oncology.

"We want to provide guidance to other specialists within the hospital, so they effectively utilize genetic testing and also see the benefits of genetic counseling services for their practices and patients. Eventually we would like to add genetic counselors to our team who cover different areas of the Valley so that patients don't have to travel long distances to have access to this care," continued Carmichael.

## Today, Valley Children's already has the largest team of genetic counselors in the region.

And mapping genetic sequences is just one part of the story. By inputting Dr. Woods' anonymized database of genetic sequences into the hospital's electronic health records (EHR), a library of best practice advisory can be built, providing guidance for rare genetic disorders. Complemented with genetic counselors, physicians have unprecedented access to insight on a child's condition, treatment options and long-term implications it may have on the patient and their family.

Gene therapy is also being used by the team, where a genetically engineered (and benign) virus is injected into a patient to reproduce needed genetic material into their cells thereby acting as therapeutic and helping to alleviate or cure an existing genetic condition.

"We're building a system that has not only already helped more than half a dozen patients discover undiagnosed rare conditions for treatment, but also for the future generations to come," said Carmichael. "We are able to utilize this genetic testing information to enable families to test future pregnancies and future generations before symptoms occour, which may help prevent the impact of certain genetic disorders that run in families. We are all doing something that is going to make a huge impact. This is what keeps us motivated every day."



CATCHING DISEASE EARLY WITH THE

## PREDISPOSITION CANCER CLINIC

Shortly after Aevalyn was born, she was taken to the Valley Children's neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). There, her care team advised her mother, Sara, that Aevalyn may have some potential genetic conditions and was a candidate for testing.

"It was a scary situation as a mother, of course," shared Sara. "But the doctors and nurses walked us through the entire process and took the time to explain everything. It's such a relief to feel safe in good hands."

Thanks to our team's expertise in new technologies like genetic testing and liquid biopsies at the Cancer Predisposition Clinic in Valley Children's Cancer and Blood Disorders Center, we can detect potential conditions and diseases that can be treated right away, leading to better outcomes.

Sara and Aevalyn went home after testing, and Sara was both surprised and grateful that their pediatrician called back within about a day, telling the family to come back to Valley Children's. It turned out that Aevalyn had Beckwith-Wiedemann Syndrome, a rare genetic condition which can lead to an increased risk of childhood cancers.

"From there it was a very smooth process," said Sara. "They had it down and already knew what to do and all about Beckwith-Widemann Syndrome. There was a whole plan for Aevalyn that involved talking to the doctors in oncology and then seeing the geneticist."

Now they have routine visits for tumor surveillance with ultrasounds and blood workup. Other subspecialty consults are available to address speech problems, leg length discrepancy, or hernia repair.

"They really make you feel comfortable," shared Sara.

Sara is also comforted by the fact that Valley Children's is a "one-stop shop," that it has all the providers Aevalyn needs for her care. Right now, Aevalyn's family is taking it one scan at a time. Her case is mild and she shows an interest in the process, regularly asking to see the ultrasound images technicians take.

"She looks forward to picking a toy from the treasure chest as a reward after her visits and her phlebotomist always draws blood and bandages Aevalyn's stuffed animals first. Then we go to the playground. It's the little things they do to help us and the kids through the process that make it special here," said Sara.





POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE

## QUALITY OF SLEEP IN CHILDREN

Children experiencing difficulty with sleep has been a well-documented problem in pediatrics for years.

However, following the pandemic, the number of children presenting with sleep issues has dramatically increased. While sleep medicine is a specialty that Valley Children's has had for years, growing community needs led Valley Children's to begin building a state-of-the-art Sleep Center. Led by Pediatric Neurologist Dr. David Suhrbier, who brings 15 years of expertise in sleep medicine, the Sleep Center is a comprehensive home to specialists, technologists and equipment designed specifically to address sleep disorders in children.

"Studies estimate 25% of children will have persistent sleep issues," said Dr. Suhrbier. "The bad news is there are many negative health implications if we don't address it. The good news is many disorders can be effectively treated."

The consequences of sleep deprivation, whether from insomnia or sleep apnea, range widely and include growth deficiencies, failure to thrive, cognitive impairment, ADHD and mood disorders. For Dr. Suhrbier, the mission is personal.

"I was in my pediatric medical training at one of the most esteemed institutions in this country, and I had a kid who didn't sleep and there were very few answers," shared Dr. Suhrbier.

Between higher levels of stress, broken routines from the pandemic, blue light from smartphones and tablets and the obesity crisis, more children are at risk for developing sleep disorders than ever before.

"You start to see the problems when it presents more as behavioral problems, cognitive deficiency and academic failure," said Dr. Suhrbier.

By creating a Sleep Center at Valley Children's, Dr. Suhrbier and his colleagues will be able to create comprehensive treatment plans for children with a host of sleep disorders by pinpointing the root causes of insomnia, sleep apnea and narcolepsy, which can be physical, hormonal or lifestyle-related. It's part of Valley Children's holistic approach to pediatrics that considers every element of a child's life in their healthy development.



**LOCAL FAMILIES** 

## RECEIVE THE GIFT OF SOUND

Cochlear implants have been a life-changing treatment option for nearly 200,000 Americans who live with severe hearing loss, according to the FDA. And while primitive versions of the device were first invented in the late 1950s, the technological innovations made in just the past decade have increased sound fidelity and provided upgrades like waterproofing. These innovations make cochlear implants in young patients not only a viable option for hearing loss, but can open doors for children to participate in all the activities their peers enjoy, whether a day at the pool or sports.

Here in the Central Valley, a longstanding challenge to unlocking this technology was access. Dr. Dan Duran, pediatric audiologist and manager of audiology services at Valley Children's, says that the process of obtaining a cochlear implant usually requires more than a dozen visits. And when families had to travel far away to the Bay Area or Los Angeles for treatment, the need to make a dozen out-of-town trips was often a barrier. That all changed when Dr. Kyle Robinette joined the team as Valley Children's cochlear implant surgeon.

"Dr. Robinette was the missing piece to bring these services to the Valley," said Dr. Duran. "Now we've been certified as the first pediatric Cochlear Implant Center in the region. We have speech therapy and audiology here and can work with patients and families at every stage of the process from one year of age through adulthood. And we are working together with them to make sure they hit all their milestones until age 21."

Now as a full-service center certified by California Children's Services, Medi-Cal will cover the devices, meaning more kids will have the potential to receive a cochlear implant at Valley Children's.

Dr. Duran also emphasizes that treatment for hearing loss is first and foremost patient- and family-centered. Valley Children's works with families to determine the best course of treatment, or non-intervention, based on what is important to them and their lifestyle.

Family support, school resources and whether or not a household is fluent in a sign language can all be considerations. For instance, according to a study by the American Academy of Pediatrics, children without early exposure to sign language achieved better speech recognition skills in the first three years post implant over those who had exposure.

Even when a family determined that a cochlear implant was the best choice for their child, the inability to access that care in the Central Valley remained an obstacle.

"In rural communities, it's more difficult to get these kinds of services. I've seen families stop the process because of the far distances," said Dr. Duran. That's something he and his team are hoping to curtail by bringing implantation surgeries to Valley Children's Hospital.

After the device is surgically implanted, a processor is attached to the patient's scalp, with each device custom mapped to a child's hearing nerve. And there is a significant adjustment for patients who receive their implant after learning language.

"They are designed for people of all ages, so time and usage are the key," said Dr. Duran. "Some families I've encouraged to pursue the technology for years and they were not prepared to commit. When they do, it's like night and day. I have parents who report major changes in their ability to communicate with their kids and it's a big deal for them."

The technology only continues to improve. Some devices are Bluetooth compatible and can pair with computers, smartphones and video game consoles. Today's implants also have an increase in sound range to help with vocal distinction that delivers sound with higher fidelity than devices manufactured just 15 years ago.

Since opening, the center has already performed nine procedures. The life-changing work is what keeps Dr. Duran excited for the future of the program.



If you come watch a patient discover sound for the first time, just make sure you bring your box of tissues."

## RESTORING

## CONFIDENCE AND SMILES

Home to one of the leading pediatric plastic surgery programs in the country, Valley Children's board-certified pediatric plastic surgeons perform life-changing procedures on children from throughout the region and from across the State.

Our pediatric plastic surgery program got its beginnings at Valley Children's decades ago, initially providing plastic surgical care to our patients for face and hand trauma, cleft lip and palate abnormalities, skull and ear deformities, in addition to many other birth defects.

Seeing a gap in the care in the services that some of our patients needed, the pediatric plastic surgery team, led by Dr. Matthew Hiersche, developed the orthognathic surgery program for correction of upper and lower jaw abnormalities – a common need for our cleft lip and palate patients but also for so many children in our community who have malocclusion (or a "bad bite") due to small or misshapen jaws.

This new specialty program, directed by Dr. Duncan Mackay, allows Valley Children's to provide the entire spectrum of cleft and craniofacial care for our patients. Orthognathic jaw surgery is often one of the final steps in a cleft patient's surgical journey – restoring an underdeveloped upper jaw and midface.

"Restoring the upper jaw and then a final nose surgery are the last steps for most cleft patients' surgical journey," said Dr. Mackay. "These surgeries can be transformational to a patient's quality of life – improved ability to chew, improved breathing from a modified nasal airway and a new sense of self-confidence with restoration of normal proportions of their facial skeleton."

"What we heard from our orthodontist colleagues in the past is that families disliked being sent elsewhere for this final piece of care," shared Dr. Hiersche.

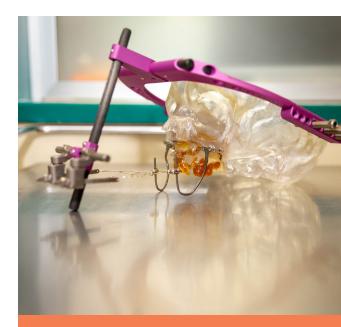
"Sometimes we see families who think a child with cleft lip and palate issues 'looks good enough' after their initial lip and palate operations and they don't appreciate the functional benefits from improved chewing, breathing and speech. Other times they may forgo it because it's an invasive procedure that sounds scary," shared Dr. Mackay.

While the benefits of the surgeries include addressing jaw pain and proper chewing, Dr. Hiersche relates that there's another factor that makes this surgery important.

"We learned from parents that many of our cleft kids with more severe malocclusion used masks mandates as a way to hide and interact with more confidence without anyone looking at their small upper jaw and lip. They're not happy with their overall appearance and they're shy. They don't speak up and they're not the person they could be," said Dr. Hiersche.

Giving children normality with both jaw function and appearance is the team's ultimate goal.

"It's maybe a little bit cliché, but I pinch myself every day," confessed Dr. Mackay. "It's humbling to be able to so profoundly change the way a child interacts with the world at a time when they are so vulnerable. Seeing the look in that child's face when they come back for their first clinic visit – there isn't a better job in the world."



Families in the Valley trust Valley Children's – and their kids have had the same care team their whole lives and developed a trusting relationship with us, so the best thing for everyone is to be able to render care through their entire course of care."

- Dr. Matthew Hiersche, Valley Children's Medical Director, Pediatric Plastic Surgery





Valley Children's exceptional quality metrics held steady — and some even improved. Through a multidisciplinary approach, our teams came together, stronger than ever, to continuously and relentlessly improve care for our young patients.

As a result of our efforts, Valley Children's Healthcare has demonstrated:

MORE THAN

92% REDUCTION

Central line-associated blood stream infections (CLABSIs) since 2012

ZERO VENTILATOR-ASSOCIATED PNEUMONIAS (VAPS)

SIXTH

Consecutive year

**NEARLY** 

77% REDUCTION

Catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTIs) since 2012

MORE THAN

94% REDUCTION

Surgical site infections (SSIs) since 2012

A DECREASE IN UNPLANNED EXTUBATIONS (UPES)

90% NICU | 75% PICU

Since 2016

99% HAND HYGIENE COMPLIANCE

As of September 20, 2022





## VALLEY CHILDREN'S RECEIVES PLATINUM CENTER OF EXCELLENCE DESIGNATION

By being named a Platinum Center, Valley Children's is recognized for being within the top 10% to 15% in patient outcomes globally compared to other Extracorporeal Life Support Organization (ELSO) centers. It's a tremendous achievement that reinforces our commitment to excellence

As the Valley's most comprehensive pediatric healthcare network, Valley Children's invests greatly in having a world-class emergency medicine team. One of the most vital lifesaving methods for infants and children experiencing potentially reversible acute cardio-

respiratory system failure is extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO).

respiratory system failure. As a last hope measure, an ECMO machine assumes the roles of the lungs and heart by providing oxygen and blood flow to the body, allowing these organs to rest and heal over a period of time, increasing chances of recovery.

Valley Children's joins only 16 centers worldwide to earn this elite designation.



## VALLEY CHILDREN'S PICU AWARDED FIFTH BEACON AWARD DESIGNATION

2022 marked Valley Children's pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) achieving its fifth re-designation as a Beacon Award recipient by the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN). This honor is bestowed upon hospitals that demonstrate sustained excellence in unit performance and patient outcomes. Valley Children's joins only 34 other centers in the nation and six others across California to earn this elite designation sustained excellence in unit performance and patient outcomes.













U.S. News & World Report, a leading authority on hospital rankings, named Valley Children's as a nationally recognized Best Children's Hospital for 2022-2023, marking our seventh consecutive appearance on the list.

U.S. News & World Report has been the most comprehensive source of quality-related information on pediatric hospitals in the United States for more than 15 years. And Valley Children's is proud to share that it is nationally ranked in six key pediatric specialties for the 2022-2023 rankings: neonatology, pediatric gastroenterology & gastrointestinal (GI) surgery, pediatric neurology & neurosurgery, pediatric orthopedics, pediatric pulmonology & lung surgery and pediatric urology.

This recognition is especially important coming out of the challenges of the pandemic, demonstrating that Valley Children's held fast to its 70-year commitment to high-quality care and providing the Valley community with access to some of the best specialists in the nation.

The Best Children's Hospitals methodology factors objective measures such as patient outcomes, including mortality and infection rates, as well as health equity and available clinical resources and compliance with best practices.



For a second consecutive year, Valley Children's was nationally recognized for its use of information technology to improve the delivery of patient care. CHIME bases its rankings of more than 38,000 organizations around the country on several relevant categories, including analytics and data management, population health, infrastructure and patient engagement. Valley Children's also holds the distinction of being ranked in both the Digital Health Certified Acute and Ambulatory categories, demonstrating a comprehensive investment in information technology across the network.

## Solutions for Patient Safety Every patient. Every day.

Solutions for Patient Safety (SPS) named Valley Children's its Hospital of the Month for October 2022. As a leading advocate for patient safety, SPS serves as a network of more than 145 children's hospitals with a shared vision that no child will ever experience serious harm while under care.

With patient care and quality of safety a central priority to every undertaking at Valley Children's, it is with great pride that we once again received national recognition for safety and patient outcomes. Patient safety is reinforced amongst Valley Children's staff, who are rigorously trained in best practices and continuously exceed quality standards of care.



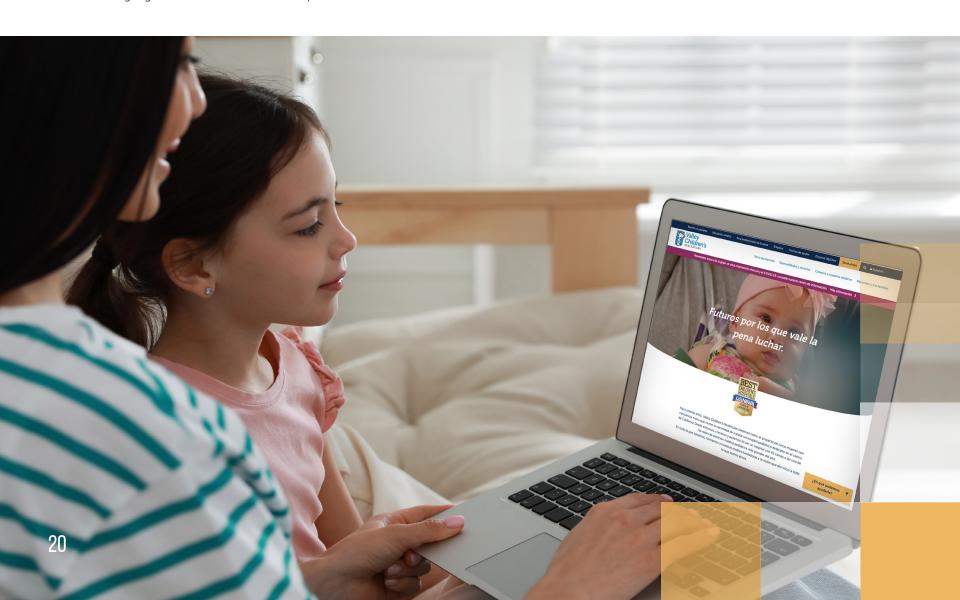
Valley Children's has again been named a Top Children's Hospital by The Leapfrog Group for exceptional achievements in patient safety and quality of care. The Leapfrog Top Children's Hospital recognition, awarded to only 5% of the nation's hospitals, is one of the most competitive awards American hospitals can receive. This is the third time in four years Valley Children's has received this award.

# VALLEY CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE EN ESPANOL

To meet our mission of providing high-quality, comprehensive services to children, it is important that we do everything we can to connect with our families in ways that work best for them, whether that's in their pediatrician's office, in our hospital, or virtually through our website.

For decades, Valley Children's has been committed to meeting the diverse needs of our region through bilingual/bicultural qualified health interpreters. We proudly serve a community with more than 100 languages and 37 distinct cultures represented.

One of the most widely spoken language in our service area is Spanish, which is why in 2022 we launched a Spanish-language version of our website: es.valleychildrens.org. The translated site makes information about our services and patient conditions more accessible to our Spanish-speaking patients and families. This milestone is the work of a multidisciplinary team, including our seasoned Interpreter Services team, Marketing and Communications and IT Services.







## ONLY ONE OF 242 WORLDWIDE ACCREDITED SIMULATION PROGRAMS

In its simplest, and certainly in its most complex, forms, few environments lend themselves to the benefits of simulated learning more than healthcare.

Our commitment to simulation, the process of recreating a healthcare environment in a safe learning space for staff and providers, is an essential element of our continuous commitment to patient safety. Valley Children's recently completed a two-year accreditation process with the Society for Simulation in Healthcare.

"Simulation allows staff to come in and ask questions, see what works and bring back the learnings that constantly improve the quality of care at Valley Children's," said Kim Bilskey, Valley Children's simulation program manager.

The accreditation recognizes the program's full spectrum of capabilities, which includes cutting-edge technology, virtual reality and manikins that display simulated heartbeats and vital signs.

2022 saw record numbers of learners in the simulation lab, some working independently with preceptors, others with their unit-based colleagues and still others in interdisciplinary teams to ensure the best and safest care for our children in every situation.

Each year, the Society for Simulation in Healthcare hosts the International Meeting for Simulation in Healthcare, where Bilskey and her colleagues give presentations to peers from all over the world. By sharing best practices that originate from work at Valley Children's, we are proud that our team is helping shape the future of simulation in healthcare and helping to improve the safety of care delivered to our patients and patients around the world.

2,688

Learners participating in simulations

4,800

Hours of simulation time

**4X** 

As many hours as when the program launched in 2015

# END CHILDREN'S DEEPENS PARTNERSHIPS TO END CHILD HOOD HUNGER

The billboard that lines Highway 99, the connecting state highway that crosses from one end of Valley Children's service area to the other, proclaims that "one out of every four Valley children does not get enough to eat every day."

Valley Children's has long been involved in issues surrounding childhood hunger. And the last few years have simply highlighted that the need persists to do more with others so that every child has nutritious food from which to choose every day.

In partnership with the Central California Food Bank, we launched three focused initiatives in 2022 that, over the next three years, will deepen our work together and the impact we can make on kids and their families.

A new school food pantry in an underserved Fresno County school district will provide food for kids and their families to take home on Friday, to help bridge the gap between school meals and, for many, weekly without a reliable food source.

In a pilot program with Valley Children's Home Care team, we have identified dozens of families with medically complex children who struggle with access to food who would benefit from the Food Bank's services but, because of their full-time care needs with their children, have trouble accessing local food banks or other community-based food programs. Our Home Care team, in one of their regular home visits, brings each family a specially assembled food box to meet their child's need, their cultural preferences and their ability to cook and prepare food.

The third element of our new partnership will support the opening of First Fruits Market, a grocery store opening in City Center, one of Fresno County's most innovative community-based programs operated by the Fresno Rescue Mission. In this central location, families will be able to receive services from childcare to healthcare to haircuts, job training and mental health services, and access foods for their families in a grocery store-like setting at no cost to them.

Over the next three years, we will measure the impact on our children and their families – far beyond the amount of food provided to also include improved health outcomes, fewer school days missed, better family health and more.

Hunger is everywhere in our Valley, and our partnerships with the Merced County Food Bank and the United Way of Merced County will allow us to continue our work in that community, delivering food to families through the network of childcare providers and Valley Children's Olivewood Specialty Care Center.

In Tulare County, we are developing new opportunities with Tulare County Food Link to expand their impact on kids and families over the next year.

In the richest agricultural region in the United States, we cannot simply drive by that billboard about childhood hunger and accept that statistic. Valley Children's is privileged to partner with so many others to get that number to zero!



## GENERATIONAL CYCLES OF TOXIC STRESS

### "The whole child."

Those words, while seemingly obvious as we care for our smallest patients, have taken on new meaning in the last decade as healthcare networks - providers, payers and patients—have recognized that it is much harder to achieve physical health when care is separated from mental health. The neighborhoods where our children live and play and the events of their childhood shape the rest of their lives.

Caring for the whole child is at the heart of Valley Children's Healthcare. And it was one of the drivers behind the \$500,000 grant from the California Department of Health Care Services to combat adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and provide toxic stress screenings.

"It is estimated that 20% of our health outcomes come from medical treatment, which means 80% of our health is determined by everything else that makes up the environment in which we live," shared Dr. Carmela Sosa-Unguez, director of Valley Children's Guilds Center for Community Health and leader of the ACEs grant project. "The Guilds Center was created to address that 80% of factors that impact a child's health."

"There are 10 original ACEs identified in the landmark Kaiser/CDC study that was done in the late 1990s, and they are related to abuse, neglect and family disruption. What may be shocking is that around 60% of adults surveyed in the study had experienced at least one ACE," said Dr. Sosa-Unguez. "Exposure to ACEs negatively correlates to health outcomes, with each ACE increasing the risk of a variety of unhealthy conditions including obesity, hypertension and substance use disorders."

With the understanding that many ACEs are either preventable or can be buffered by positive and protective factors, the goal of the grant is to disrupt these cycles of toxic stress through increased screening, education and collaborative partnerships. Dr. Sosa-Unguez and her team began their work by screening for ACEs in children and educating parents on ACEs, toxic stress and how to build resilience in themselves and their children.

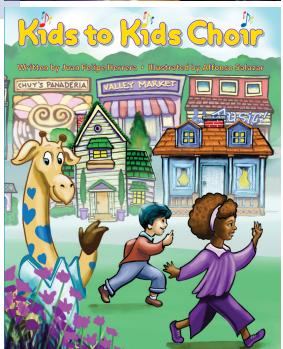
"I was screening a young patient and as Mom read the questionnaire she said, 'That's what's wrong with me? I had all of these things happen to me," shared Dr. Sosa-Unguez. "It's so important to screen and identify families at risk. This allows us to positively support our patients and their parents, to empower them to break what are often generational cycles of dysfunction, leading to healthier lives for families." The solution requires systemic change and requires close partnerships between communities and organizations to provide community-based support beyond direct patient care.

The grant has three main goals: 1) strengthen partnerships between providers, community-based organizations and healthcare plans to effectively respond to ACEs; 2) expand a sustainable workforce to address toxic stress; and 3) implement evidence-based services to address ACEs and toxic stress. Our work will help identify patients and families at risk for poor health outcomes as a result of ACEs and toxic stress; educate providers, staff and community members around ACEs and toxic stress and how to intervene; connect families to needed resources; and build resilience to break the cycle.

"While it is important to provide immediate interventions when a family is in need, such as a box of food, we cannot overlook the significance of the long-term consequences of our actions or inactions," said Dr. Sosa-Unguez. "By doing nothing, the cycle continues. By working to disrupt the transmission of ACEs and toxic stress, we can have a considerable impact on the long-term health outcomes of our children, decreasing the likelihood they will have depression, anxiety, diabetes and even cancer as adults. We are truly honored to be a part of this transformational work."







## FORMER UNITED STATES POET LAUREATE JOINS VALLEY CHILDREN'S LITERACY CAMPAIGN AND PENS OUR VERY OWN POEM

As part of our ongoing literacy campaign, we were thrilled to partner with world-famous poet and Valley native Juan Felipe Herrera to publish "Kids to Kids Choir," our seventh book through the Guilds Center for Community Health.

It is also important for our kids to meet real-life role models like former United States Poet Laureate Herrera, who was inspired to write this poetry in order to uplift the spirits of our teams and patients during the pandemic.

That's why it was a very special event when Mr. Herrera joined us in celebration of Family Literacy Month at the aptly named Juan Felipe Herrera Elementary School in Fresno to personally give students a copy of "Kids to Kids Choir." But, only after spending time singing, dancing and reading alongside our Valley kids! Valley Children's also teamed up with Madera Unified School District to hold a book distribution at La Vina Elementary. We are very thankful to have local leaders like Mr. Herrera, who take a personal interest in our children's intellectual and creative development alongside our Valley Children's volunteers. "Kids to Kids Choir" joins our library of six other books created with the knowledge that literacy is a key driver of a child's success and access to quality educational books can encourage lifelong learning.

## INVESTING IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR OUR KIDS

What better way to encourage kids to play and be physically active than partnering with youth sports leagues across our Valley?

Over the last few years, Valley Children's commitment to keeping kids well where they live, learn and play has caused us to look at new ways to support children in their schools and neighborhoods - and in their sports leagues.

Whether it be support for a team or support for kids unable to afford registration fees, Valley Children's has been honored to work alongside our region's strong youth sports networks in soccer, baseball, softball and more.

Valley Children's recognizes the invaluable physical, personal and developmental benefits that sports bring to all people, especially children building lifelong habits.





### **BIG NAMES LEND A HAND**

The Valley is proud to call professional athletes like Derek Carr, David Carr, Aaron Judge and professional golfer Kevin Chappell our own. Their generosity has made a huge difference to our kids and to Valley Children's.

It is not uncommon to see one of them on campus for a visit, spending time with patients and lifting their spirits during their time here. A moment with an NFL quarterback or major league outfielder is sometimes the very best medicine we can provide.

# YOUTH SUICIDE PREVIOUS THE FIGHT FOR YOUTH SUICIDE PREVIOUS PREVIOUS THE FIGHT FOR YOUTH SUICIDE PROVIDE PROVIDE

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for children, adolescents and young adults, ages 10-24 years. These rates have increased significantly in the U.S., nearly tripling between 2007 and 2017. What is even more staggering is that the stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to an even further rise in suicidal ideation and deaths by suicide among children and teens across the country. A study funded by the National Institutes of Health found that the proportion of youth suicides among the total number of suicides increased during the pandemic nationally, with California seeing an increase from 4.7% to 5.4%. The study's authors noted that suicides among adults 45 and older declined during the pandemic, suggesting the pandemic may have affected young people differently.

No child, no family, no geographic region is immune to the risk of suicide. What was seen across the country was echoed here in our own community. That is why universal screening for suicide risk was implemented in our Emergency Department, Day Surgery and Acute Care units, with 26,000 patients screened for risk in 2022.

While no one is immune to the risk of suicide, there are evidence-based interventions that can lower that risk, with the aspirational goal of having zero deaths by suicide. Some of this critical work to minimize suicide risk across the country is led by the Zero Suicide Institute and the Cardinal Health Foundation and is supported by the Children's Hospital Association.

Valley Children's Healthcare is proud to participate in this national collaboration. In its second cohort, Valley Children's has joined 15 other children's hospitals to deploy a continuous quality improvement methodology to our work around youth mental health and suicide prevention.

"Valley Children's has a longstanding commitment to 'getting to zero' on several patient safety issues. We have found tremendous success and learned from others by participating in collaboratives and are fully committed to applying a similar approach to suicide prevention in our patients and in our communities," says Raed Khoury, vice president, Quality & Patient Safety and Clinical Value. "These collaboratives truly are based on the simple belief that everyone does better when everyone does better."

The work for each hospital in the collaborative will vary by organization, their current level of work in this area, the mental health resources in their communities and more. For Valley Children's, there is already a strong foundation built, including staff education, patient screening and assessment and engaging the schools with our school-age patients, when appropriate.

"Our focus will likely be on ensuring consistent screening, maximizing the capability of Epic to help us care for kids at risk, building in fail-safe 'warm handoffs' for kids leaving our care and returning to their community, and regional education for healthcare providers, schools and first responders," says Dr. Carmela Sosa-Unguez, director of Guilds Center for Community Health.

"The goal of 'zero youth suicides' is an aspirational goal," says Lynne Ashbeck, Valley Children's chief community impact officer. "It is our privilege and our opportunity to work toward this goal for kids in the communities we serve – and the families and friends who surround them. It is often said that suicide is preventable. That is our North Star."





## CHALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, we invited Fresno State students to join our patients and staff in decorating our South Lawn with words of encouragement. It's important to talk openly about mental health and remember that it is just as important as physical health.

# EPILEPSY PROGRAM EDUCATES AND RAISES AWARENESS

We know some disorders and conditions can be unnerving to those who are unfamiliar or uneducated about them. One such condition is epilepsy, the central nervous system disorder that results in seizures. Unfortunately, epilepsy is still a condition with many common misconceptions.

For the Ayala family, education about epilepsy is personal. Monica Ayala and all three of her children have been living with epilepsy their entire lives.

Today the Ayalas all have a vagus nerve stimulator (VNS) implant to help treat seizures. When medications are not enough, a VNS can be an effective treatment. It is a pacemaker-like device, implanted in the chest that stimulates the vagus nerve connected to the brain. By passing a specialized magnet over the VNS implant in the chest, the stimulation is sent to the brain through a wire and attempts to interrupt the brain, "resetting it," or preventing a seizure from progressing.

"As early as 9 months old, we didn't know what was going on with my first-born daughter, Bridgette. When she was seizing my mother would run and put her in the shower, which the paramedics then told us not to do," said Monica. "Then my second child, Allan, started having seizures when he was a baby. 'Why is this happening again?' I asked myself. My third child, Kimberly, had her first seizure shortly after being born."

By talking to staff at Valley Children's, Monica quickly learned that epilepsy is a common neurological condition that wasn't anybody's fault. But that reassurance did not make growing up with epilepsy any easier for the Ayala children.

"Growing up, it made me feel left out," shared Kimberly. "I tried to put it in God's hands and have the confidence to go out in public, but when I had a seizure in church, I felt a mixture of embarrassment and happiness to hear that everyone at church stepped up and helped. It's about educating people about my condition."

While there is no cure for epilepsy or way to always prevent seizures, education and devices like the VNS have been a big help. Not too long ago, the Ayala kids noticed their mom was having a seizure. Because of what they learned through Valley Children's

Epilepsy Support Program, they were able to call 911 and calmly manage the situation and advocate for their mom. In fact, by seeing how the VNS worked with her children, Monica had the confidence to speak with doctors about getting one for herself.

The Epilepsy Support Program at Valley Children's is about education, but it's also about creating a safe place to talk about the disorder and empower patients. The Ayala family wants to make sure that young people with epilepsy feel supported and do not go through the shame they felt growing up.

"I would have seizures at school before and used to get bullied about it," said Bridgette. "I wasn't confident. So, I want people with epilepsy to know they are not alone. We are here for each other. Do not hide your condition from friends or family. Talk about it and bring it out in the open."

"We will tell people we have seizures, and they might get scared thinking they'll have a responsibility to take care of us and that it's a lot of pressure," said Allan. "Educating people about our condition helps take away some of that pressure. We're all in this together and supportive. We have each other's backs."



**VALLEY CHILDREN'S TURNS GREEN FOR** 

# NATIONAL INJURY PREVENTION DAY

On November 18, 2022, Valley Children's "turned green" – from switching the color of its lights to staff wearing green outfits – to bring awareness to National Injury Prevention Day at the hospital and across communities.

Valley Children's has led the work of Safe Kids Central California since 2010. The coalition of 30 community organizations, hospitals, schools, and police, fire and ambulance service providers, is the Central Valley's leading voice in raising awareness and preventing unintentional injuries to our kids.

"By its very description, 'unintentional injuries' are, indeed, preventable injuries in nearly every instance," says Kristina Pasma, RN, Safe Kids Coordinator. "At Valley Children's, we are committed every day to doing our part to keep our kids safe from risk factors such as improper seat belt use and car seat installation, improperly fitted bike helmets, accidental exposure to household chemicals and medications, firearm accidents, rail crossings and more."

This year, the Valley Children's team, led by Pasma and fellow trauma nurse Mary Jo Quintero pulled out all the stops to increase awareness of National Injury Prevention Day through many local activities in support of that nationwide effort.

From more than 100 bicycle helmets distributed to kids during a safety fair at a local mall to hundreds of car seat inspections to 400 gun locks provided in partnership with the Fresno Police Department, and proclamations from elected officials across several Valley counties, the message about keeping our kids safe was front and center this year.

Fresno Police Chief Paco Balderama joined with Valley Children's physicians and nurses to demonstrate proper gun lock usage and safe storage to keep kids safe in homes where firearms are present.

"Our mission calls for us to do all we can to care for kids – whether inside our hospital or physician offices as well as where kids live, learn and play. We are honored to partner with community leaders and organizations to champion injury prevention every day of the year," said Lynne Ashbeck, Valley Children's senior vice president and chief community impact officer.

And if you thought you were seeing "green" this year, just wait until 2023! Valley Children's injury prevention team is busy planning next year's events, including a new book featuring our beloved mascot, George, helping kids to learn about injury prevention and safety tips they can use every day.





Help keep kids safe.

VIEW SAFE KIDS VIDEOS



## VALLEY CHILDREN'S AND FRESNO STATE

## A PERFECT TEAM

Valley Children's and Fresno State, two iconic institutions in the Central Valley, have teamed up to advance healthcare and education for a lasting impact on our community. The 10-year partnership will provide funding for scholarships, fuel the pipeline of future healthcare workers and provide other innovative solutions that strengthen our work in children's health. Through this shared commitment, we will be able to recruit the best and the brightest to our respective organizations, bringing top talent from across the nation to our area to live and work.

Our partnership with Fresno State Athletics has also created special opportunities for the families we serve. In addition to our ongoing "Kid Captain" program, where patients join team captains midfield

for the pregame coin toss, we partnered with Fresno State to host six unforgettable game day tailgate experiences.

We invited families of cancer survivors, NICU grads, George's Pass (a program for patients with autism spectrum disorder and sensory issues) families, Adaptive Sports program participants and more to honor their courage and strength, and to provide them with one-of-a-kind stadium experiences.

At the heart of the work at Valley Children's is the chance to impact every child we care for, in ways large and small. For some, attending a major collegiate football game may not be a new experience. But for many of our kids, we were able to create lifetime memories through simple acts.



Sylus is one of our Adaptive Sports athletes and his mom, Sarah, reported: "This is our first time at a Fresno State football game and Sylus has been excited for the chance to get out and cheer on the Bulldogs. To have this experience with our entire family is even more special than I could have ever imagined."



Ten-year-old NICU grad and Kid Captain of the Game, Aubrey chatted with Fresno State's president about her dream to become a doctor. Naturally, he encouraged her to become a Bulldog. Her parents shared: "We cannot put into words how much joy and happiness we all felt surrounded by fellow NICU grad families. It was an unforgettable experience".



One of our Fresno State student guests, Jakob, shared why our experience was special to him: "Because of COVID-19, I hadn't been able to do much in my community, but I jumped at the chance to come. It's always inspiring when I see other survivors, especially ones older than me. It reminds me that I am not the only one and that there is a healthy life ahead to live!"



Inclusiveness is a key value of our Fresno State partnership, and we were so happy to hear from some of our George's Pass families, including Kane and his mom, Kelsey, who shared: "It felt so good to be with other families who understand and for Kane to have a place where he felt like it was for him. All of the special details, including sensory toys, were like an unspoken way of saying, 'You belong here!'"

BECKER'S —

## **HOSPITAL REVIEW**

# TOP 150 PLACES TO WORK IN HEALTHCARE

Becker's Healthcare, one of the leading healthcare industry publications, named Valley Children's to its list of Top 150 Places to Work in Healthcare in 2022. This is the second time Valley Children's has received this distinction, in recognition of promoting diversity within the workforce, employee engagement and providing opportunities for professional growth.

For 70 years, Valley Children's has been committed to taking exceptional care of our teams and their families just as our doctors,

nurses and staff take such great care of children and families in the communities we serve. Throughout the challenges of recent years, Valley Children's avoided layoffs, funded annual salary adjustments, continued retirement plan contributions and prioritized the safety of our team with a primary and urgent care clinic for the workforce and family members, enhanced mental health services and access to personal protective equipment, including N95 masks.

## 2022 RESEARCH STATS

347
Patients Enrolled in Studies

**57**Articles Published

247

Studies

Departments
Participating in
Research

Members of Valley Children's Workforce Published

## NATIONAL LATINO/A PHYSICIAN DAY

## FOUNDED BY VALLEY CHILDREN'S PEDIATRIC SURGEON

Dr. Michael Galvez knew at a young age that he wanted to become a physician. As he took steps to achieve his goal, he became more and more aware at each stage that there were not many physicians who looked like him or who understood the challenges faced by families like his.

Today, Dr. Galvez is a board-certified plastic and reconstructive surgeon who has done extensive research in plastic and hand surgery at Valley Children's Healthcare. Perhaps even more acutely aware of - and more firmly committed to - the disparities in the physician workforce, Dr. Galvez founded National Latino/a Physician Day on October 1 to raise awareness of the need for more Latinos and Latinas in medicine, who make up just 6% of all physicians in the United States.

Dr. Galvez is passionate about helping young people in the Central Valley live full lives, both through his medical work and his advocacy for educational and career opportunities.

"Trust isn't something that is just given to me as a doctor, so it is important for me to find a way to genuinely connect, explain and then present the care options to my patients," shared Dr. Galvez. "I am also hopeful that my experience motivates other Latinos to pursue the medical field because the community needs them."

Every healthcare network recognizes that in order to best serve the patients and families we are privileged to care for, we must focus on the key issues of cultural competence and workforce diversity. The Central Valley has long been recognized for its diversity. And with that diversity comes a unique opportunity to work every day to ensure that the people caring for our kids at Valley Children's reflect that diversity.

To celebrate the launch of National Latino/a Physician Day, a T-shirt campaign raised thousands of dollars for MiMentor, a non-profit aimed at helping underserved students enter medicine. Dr. Galvez's campaign also resulted in: 14.4 million views, more than 3,300 social media shares and more than 1,000 posts and live events across the country, including segments on NBC News.

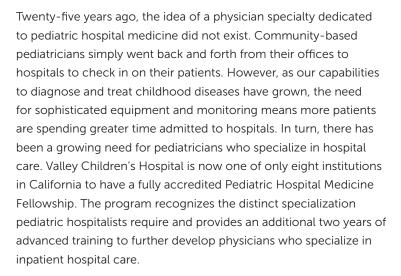
And Dr. Galvez is just getting started. As he reminds us: "6% is not enough."

To learn more about National Latino/a Physician Day, visit https://www.nationallatinophysicianday.com/



# TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION DESCRIPTION

OF PEDIATRIC HOSPITALISTS



"Residency teaches you how to be a generalist in whatever your field might be. So, for us in pediatrics, you pass your boards and then are certified as competent as a general pediatrician," explained Dr. Nicole Webb, Pediatric Hospital Medicine Fellowship program director. "Fellowships provide additional specialty training. With time and medical advances, the needs of hospitalized children have changed, and so has the skill set, so there is a need in many cases for specialized training."

"In the past decade, there's been a push to recognize the field of pediatric hospitalists as distinctly separate from general pediatric training, with a whole process whereby we petitioned to be recognized as a subspecialty by the American Board of Pediatrics," continued Dr. Webb. "This fellowship is hopefully a way of recruiting and retaining well-trained people to stay here in the Valley and to raise the bar in terms of providing excellent care to our kids."

While the fellowship serves as an educational program, its mission and core values are deeply rooted in those of Valley Children's as a whole, to provide the best possible care to our kids. Dr. Webb

shared that fellows will be focused on issues such as advocacy and health equity. She sees highlighting the fact that Valley Children's patient mix is 78% underserved as something that will attract pediatricians who are passionate about advocating for underserved children.

Starting in July 2023, two fellows will join Valley Children's Hospital for a two-year curriculum that includes core clinical rotations, a systems and scholarship section focused on quality improvement and patient safety, advocacy and research, and an individualized curriculum with electives customized to their needs.

"Nearly every candidate that we interviewed talked about our patient population, advocacy, and patient and family-centered care," said Dr. Webb. "And they see our patients and families as partners. We exist in service to them and listen to them."

Each fellow will be assigned a general mentor and a research mentor to help guide them in their scholarly projects and overall goals. Completion of a scholarly project is a requirement to graduate and to be eligible to take the board exam in pediatric hospital medicine. Because pediatric hospitalists are major drivers of systems change in hospitals, there is a lot of emphasis on learning these skills in fellowship training.

"Patients cared for by hospitalists as an aggregate have a shorter length of stay or likelihood of needing to be readmitted," said Dr. Webb. "So, this is truly a step toward our mission of really becoming the best children's hospital."

Today, there are only about 70 pediatric hospital medicine fellowships nationwide and they did not begin receiving accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education until 2020. That means Valley Children's is at the forefront of what will be multi-decade growth in the subspecialty.



## **VALLEY CHILDREN'S:**

# AFFAMILY AFFAIR

It is nearly impossible to go anywhere in the Central Valley wearing a Valley Children's logo on a sweatshirt, scrubs or department T-shirt without someone stopping you to tell that their parents were cared for at Valley Children's, that they themselves spent time at the hospital as they were growing up, that their own children have been cared for at Valley Children's and now their grandchildren are often following suit.

THAT is what a legacy of more than 70 years of service looks like.

But it also looks like generations of family members also passing on their love and service to the organization as employees!

The leadership of Valley Children's has been amazing and inspires you to go above and beyond. I hope in 10 years to still be Valley Children's, where my mom inspires me."

- Patrick Shannon, Pediatric Care Technician



Take, for example, Kellie Smith and her daughter, Morgan Smith.

Starting as a phlebotomist, Kellie has served in a variety of roles, both clinical and administrative since 1982. Today, she's a manager in the revenue integrity department and credits the people of Valley Children's for making it an incredible place to plant roots.

"The support I've always had from my managers and directors has always been incredible, with the opportunity to learn more and grow," said Smith. Her daughter, Morgan, recounts hearing about Valley Children's growing up and coming to the hospital to visit her mom and for treatment for sports injuries. Today, Morgan works in the Emergency Department as a health unit coordinator, inspired by seeing her mom build a satisfying career at Valley Children's. She is currently studying nursing and hopes to have a long career at the hospital herself.

Kelley Shannon (pictured with her oldest son, Patrick Shannon) started at Valley Children's in 1989, working in Perioperative Services. For more than 15 years, she's been in a management role overseeing Day Surgery and other perioperative departments. Starting her career in a general hospital setting, she never imagined a career in pediatrics until she took a job opportunity at Valley Children's and was sold right away, falling in love with the practice and the people. Her greatest memories have been helping kids and families and watching colleagues flourish both professionally and personally. Today, her son, Patrick, is a pediatric care technician focused on patient care.

"The leadership of Valley Children's has been amazing and inspires you to go above and beyond. My coworkers are amazing and the kids are amazing," shared Patrick Shannon. "I hope in 10 years to still be Valley Children's, where my mom inspires me."







# GENERATIONS OF FAMILIES COUNT ON VALLEY CHILDREN'S



Valley Children's has been part of the fabric of Central California and beyond for seven decades and it is not unusual to care for multiple generations of a single family - from the grandparents when they were kids, to their own children and now to their grandchildren.

The story of Jessica and her family represents the joy and privilege in caring for generations of family members.

In 1989, when Jessica's mom was pregnant with her, Joyce Young – a physician assistant in the Willson Heart Center at Valley Children's - performed an echocardiogram on her mom to screen and diagnose possible heart conditions in Jessica before birth.

At the time, Pediatric Cardiologist Dr. James Prochazka diagnosed baby Jessica with a benign tumor on the left side of her heart, which required surgery. Jessica made a full recovery thanks to the intervention and went back to the business of simply being a kid.

Fast forward to 2019. Jessica, now a now 31-year-old mother-to-be, returned to Valley Children's for another echocardiogram — this time for her son, Ryker. The test found that Ryker had a small hole in his heart that would also require surgery. Valley Children's surgeons repaired his heart and Jessica reports that Ryker is a happy and healthy little boy.

During Ryker's hospital stay, Jessica had a chance to reconnect with Joyce and Dr.

Prochazka, the very same people who helped her when she was a baby all those years ago. It was a joyful reunion and Jessica had a chance to express her appreciation.

"Those who were caring for Ryker made me feel like they really loved my child," said Jessica. "My parents also expressed how happy they were with my care, and I knew that it would be that same care for Ryker. The fact that clinicians like Dr. Prochazka and Joyce are still around so many years later shows me that they really love what they do."

SPECIAL GIFTS FROM

## SPECIAL FRIENDS

Valley Children's is a special place to all of us. A major part of why we are a nationally ranked children's hospital year after year is due to the dedicated work, projects and donations led by volunteers. People who have come to Valley Children's and experienced the hope we see every day feel an attachment here, and we are honored by their generosity through special gifts that touch so many lives. Here are some of the recent gifts that uplift the spirits of our patients, families and staff.





### NEW PLAYGROUND BRINGS INCLUSIVE FUN TO VALLEY CHILDREN'S PATIENTS

This past year, many of our patients and their families joined NFL quarterback and Valley Children's Ambassador Derek Carr in celebrating our newly renovated playground.

This new playground includes a putting green, interactive sound experience and inclusive playground equipment designed to enrich the experience of all our patients. The playground is part of our commitment to providing a safe, healing and joyful experience for patients and families.

Many pro athletes give back to their communities, but for Carr, Valley Children's is a personal mission. His son Dallas was a patient with us in 2013.

"Every morning I wake up and I see Dallas," shared Carr. "And I don't ever take it for granted what the team did here to help save my son's life."

Thank you to the Carr family, Quiring General LLC, Jeanne and Charles Hoey and all our donors for creating a wonderful and interactive experience for all to enjoy for years to come.



### DISNEY BRINGS MAGIC TO VALLEY CHILDREN'S

Thanks to a longstanding relationship with ABC30 and Disney, Valley Children's is now home to magical interactive artwork and installations throughout the hospital. Curiosity, wonder and joy are important parts of every child's recovery, so to have Disney characters throughout Valley Children's Hospital and many of our specialty and primary care practices is a truly incredible gift that brings comforting, familiar faces to our patients.

Kids at the hospital and in several primary and specialty care practices can interact with Magic Windows that offer mesmerizing views into the world of Disney, Pixar, Marvel and Star Wars. A new mobile movie theater inspired by the cinema at Disneyland's Main Street USA gives patients and their families a place to gather and watch Disney movies and content.



### PENS FOR PEDIATRICS

Most second graders spend their summers at camp or at play, but 7-year-old Raegan decided to spend hers fundraising for the hospital that cared for her and her brother. The Fresno girl spent her summer vacation making custom pens, selling them to family and friends and raising more than \$2,600 for Valley Children's! Raegan says she had so much fun making the pens and hopes this donation helps the babies in the NICU. Raegan's family is very familiar with the incredibly hard work of the NICU teams both Raegan and her older brother, Maddox, are Valley Children's "NICU grads." Says mom Amanda: "We are so proud of Raegan's kind and generous heart. From a very young age, she has always been mindful of others and looking for ways to help. We're excited to see what she'll do next." Valley Children's is excited to see what's next for Raegan, too!



### KIDS DAY

Always a big day on the calendar, the 2022 Kids Day took place virtually and was a huge success. People from all around the community donated more than \$318,000 thanks our Kids Day partners, ABC30 and The Fresno Bee. Since the first Kids Day 35 years ago, more than \$10.7 million has been raised to meet the most immediate needs of patients at Valley Children's.



### SANTA CELEBRATION AT VALLEY CHILDREN'S WITH AMAZON'S TEAM

Valley Children's is thankful for the support of Amazon and its operational leaders and employees from local fulfillment centers in Fresno, Visalia and Turlock who put together a holiday surprise for hundreds of patients.

The holiday season can be difficult for patients in the hospital. Away from home, they do not get the normal experience of waking up and opening their presents under the tree. So, it was a special treat indeed this past holiday season when Amazon brought Santa (and some Amazon elves) to Valley Children's to deliver a stuffed puppy toy and an Amazon Fire Kids Tablet for each child to make spirits bright during the season of giving.

In addition, Amazon donated \$100,000 to Valley Children's that will go toward the Claude and Betty Lou Laval Angel Fund that directly supports patients and families to meet their financial needs during their hour of greatest need. The intent of the Angel Fund is to allow families to focus on supporting their children through the medical treatment process by easing some of the financial challenges that a family may incur, such as transportation expenses, temporary lodging or housing assistance, utilities and other necessities.



### EAGLE SCOUT BUILDS LITTLE LIBRARY FOR PATIENTS AT PELANDALE SPECIALTY CARE CENTER

Modesto Eagle Scout Tejas Mathai knew he wanted to do something impactful that would touch many people. Each Eagle Scout undertakes a service project, and Tejas set about building, painting and installing a Little Library at Pelandale and then filled it with books for children to take home.

Knowing that coming to the specialty care center could be an anxious experience, he saw that a Little Library would help calm nerves and provide a distraction that was both educational and fun

"This Little Library is so great because it has brought joy to the kids who come to our clinic," shared Pelandale Manager Esthela De La Cruz.

Additionally, Tejas has raised thousands of dollars for Valley Children's over the last five years by donating proceeds from books that he has authored.

Valley Children's thanks Tejas for his thoughtful donation that brings smiles to patients in Stanislaus County and across the network.

### **GUILD ENDOWMENTS**

The Guilds Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Endowment:

\$5,264,111

The Guilds Child Life Endowment:

\$1,327,508

The Guilds Heart Center Endowment:

\$2,579,323

The Guilds Spiritual Care Endowment:

\$1,258,319

The Guilds Center for Community Health:

\$2,335,715

### GUILDS OF VALLEY CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE

Alegria Guild

1950

La Sierra Guild 1999

El Rio Reyes Guild La Tienda Guild

2021

1952

Holiday Guild

La Visionaria Guild

1953

2007 Los Rancheros Guild

Kings Guild 1950

1949

La Comida Guild

Padrinos Guild

1953

2015

La Feliz Guild 1949

Tenaya Guild

1950

Las Madrinas Guild

1950





### THE GUILDS THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH VALLEY CHILDREN'S IS BUILT

There is no doubt that the support provided to Valley Children's - from every community in this Valley, thousands of businesses, tens of thousands of individuals - in ways large and small, has been foundational to our success as an organization and, most importantly, in our ability to care for our kids and their families.

But no group has done more to uplift our mission than our Guilds. In fact, the Guilds are older than Valley Children's Hospital, starting their work in 1949 and leading the way to our founding. Truly no one has stood for us longer and with more impact than our Guilds, who touch the very heart of Valley Children's and continue to help us provide endowments and programs to address the needs of kids, both in the hospital and across the Valley.

Today there are 13 Guilds throughout the Valley, each dedicated to raising funds, advocating for children and promoting goodwill on our behalf, and keeping the work we provide for patients and families top of mind with each event they host.

Without the Guilds, it is safe to say that Valley Children's may have never made it past the "idea" stage. Seventy years later, we are standing on the shoulders of our five founding mothers and early Guild members, honored to continue to carry out their vision generations later.

### ALL GUILD PICNIC: CELEBRATING 70 YEARS OF SERVICE

The first All Guild Picnic was held on May 4, 1954, at Giffen Garden.

Seven decades later, this annual gathering is a muchanticipated event of celebration, tradition and gratitude.

To celebrate our 70th anniversary, Valley Children's

hosted the All Guild Picnic on the South Lawn of the hospital. Joining President and CEO Todd Suntrapak at this year's event were Bishop Emeritus Armando Ochoa of the Fresno Catholic Diocese and volunteer with Valley Children's Spiritual Services, who gave the invocation, and NFL veteran and former Fresno State star David Carr, who thanked the Guilds with personal and inspirational remarks, honoring their work that continues to inspire hope.

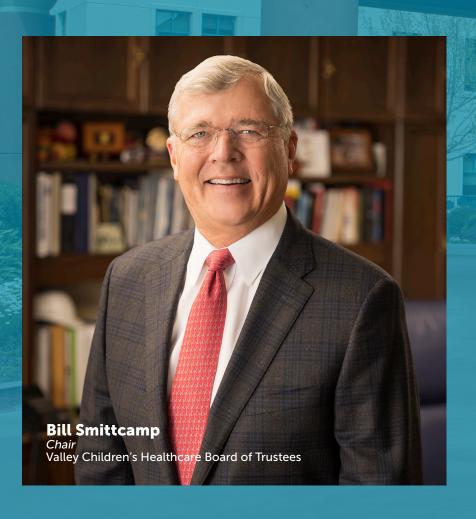
The annual picnic – the first in-person one since COVID-19 – was the perfect event for the Guilds to present a check representing three years of fundraising: 2019, 2020 and 2021 – for a total of \$2,425,880! This donation will make a huge impact on the \$5 million goal toward the Guilds Center for Community Health, the first of its kind center in the Central Valley focused on keeping kids well where they live, learn and play.

The Guilds Center for Community Health is focused on addressing the social determinants that impact a child's health, including the neighborhoods where they live, the health choices they make, their access to reliable and healthy foods and more.

### TOYOTA TUNDRA GIVEAWAY AT THE WORLD AG EXPO

In 2022, the Guilds hosted their 8th annual Toyota Tundra Giveaway in partnership with Central California Toyota Dealers and the World Ag Expo in Tulare, California. With presales starting in September and extending during the Expo, the Guilds raised an incredible \$79,200 with a cumulative total of \$550,179 since the giveaway began in 2015. The Guilds continue to be thankful to these partners and the community for their support.

# EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNANCE



Valley Children's Healthcare is governed by four aligned Boards of Trustees who serve at the organizational, Hospital, Medical Foundation and philanthropic Foundation levels. They are comprised of dedicated and diverse leaders from communities and sectors across the state.

The commitment demonstrated by our Board members to ensure fidelity to our mission in every decision is extraordinary. Each action they consider - both large and small - is shaped by the profound responsibility they each share to carry forward the vision of our founding mothers and to ensure that Valley Children's is strongly positioned in these turbulent times and for future generations.

Our Trustees guide Valley Children's with their strategic insights, wisdom and compassion... and we are grateful for their service.



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### GIVING LEVELS AND DONORS

Valley Children's gratefully recognizes new gifts, multiyear pledges and payments on past year's pledges during the 2022 calendar year. Life-to-Date giving is recognized on the donor wall at Valley Children's Hospital.

### \$1,000,000 & ABOVE

Children's Miracle Network Hospitals Partners & Programs\*

Fresno Truck Center

Guilds of Valley Children's

Hospital\*\*

### \$500,000 TO \$999,999

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- Regional Level IV

387,616 PATIENT ENCOUNTERS

670+ Physicians 3,500+ **Employees** 400+ Volunteers

**STAFF** 

214,236 **SPECIALTY CARE VISITS** 

**Specialty Care Centers** 

**Primary Care Locations** 

Women's Health Practice

**FACILITIES** 

330 358 Main Hospital

**BEDS** 

10,482 INPATIENT DISCHARGES

86,895 **EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS**  66,573

**PRIMARY CARE VISITS** 

7,285
OB/GYN VISITS

2,145
OBSERVATIONS

47
STATES WHERE OUR PATIENTS RESIDE

## CLINICAL TRAINING & EDUCATION

330
RESIDENTS AND MEDICAL STUDENTS

982

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