



For Immediate Release

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Growing Together: Cook Children's Unveils Plan to Expand Critical Care to Meet Community Demand

Fort Worth, Texas – As Fort Worth continues to experience rapid growth, the demand for specialized pediatric care has increased significantly. To address this need, Cook Children's is preparing to embark on a 10-year master plan, beginning with the construction of a new 700,000-square-foot medical tower, referred to as the West Tower. This plan will allow for a new and improved Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), an expanded Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), as well as additional capacity for Hematology/Oncology services, operating rooms, and imaging services.

"Our place in this world is to be there when kids need us, and to provide that necessary support for that family and that child so that they're able to have as productive of a life as they possibly can," said Stan Davis, president of Cook Children's Medical Center. "So the belief is we do that by having the facilities, having the physicians and caregivers, having the technology, but also having the heart and the commitment of our community and our team to be able to do that when it's necessary. That's why we're here. We stand in the middle of being able to and not being able to provide that necessary critical care."

Since 2016, Cook Children's has seen an almost 90% increase in patient days, or the cumulative care provided over a period of time. Respiratory illness is the top driver of PICU admissions, followed by neurologic injury and disorders of the endocrine system. During busy sick seasons, it's not uncommon to see 500 to 600 patients in a single day in the Emergency Department (ED), with many requiring admission to the PICU.

The new PICU will feature 56 private rooms, designed to provide a calm and healing environment for patients and their families. The NICU will also be expanded with an additional 37 beds to accommodate the increasing number of critically ill newborns.

"It's an ambitious plan, but it's exactly what we need to support the growing population and demand for services in our area," said Rick W. Merrill, president and CEO of Cook Children's Health Care System. "Kids and families rely on us, and have for more than a century, and we want to make sure we're in a position to continue to be a beacon of hope, where every child receives the care they deserve now and for generations to come."

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About Cook Children's

Cook Children's is more than a health care system: we strive to be an extension of your family, growing with your child from their first steps to adulthood. By collaborating to deliver on our Promise—to improve the well-being of every child in our care and our communities, we connect the dots for our patients. Between primary and specialty. Between home and medical home. Between short-term care and long-term health.

Based in Fort Worth, Texas, we're 10,000+ dedicated team members strong, passionately caring for over 2 million patient encounters each year. Our integrated, not-for-profit organization spans two medical centers (including our state-of-the-art location in Prosper), two surgery centers, a physician network, home health services and a health plan. It also includes Child Study Center at Cook Children's, Cook Children's Health Services Inc., and Cook Children's Health Foundation. In 2024, Forbes named Cook Children's the top health care employer in the U.S., and third on the list of ['America's Best Large Employers.'](#)

And our impact extends beyond the borders of Texas. We proudly treat children from virtually every state in the nation and 32 countries. By seeing the world through the eyes of children and their families from all backgrounds, we're able to shape health care suited to them: connected by kindness, imagination and respect—with an extra dose of magical wonder.

Discover more at cookchildrens.org.