

## *Being Creative Improves Pediatric Pain Care*

### **Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Division of Pain Management**

Traditionally, shots and pills were seen as the main way to treat pain in children. Many treatment models focused on the hurting body part and not the whole patient.

“We’re not afraid to try something new if that’s what’s right,” says Kenneth Goldscheider, M.D., FAACP, director of the division of pain management, “and are not restricted by traditional boundaries when it comes to finding out why children hurt and what to do for their pain.”



Kenneth Goldschneider, MD

Cincinnati Children's approaches a child in a holistic way. Division members draw from a wide array of treatment options to fashion individualized treatments for their patients. All patients and their families presenting to the Chronic Pain Clinic receive an initial assessment by the entire interdisciplinary team as well as integrated follow-up. Ongoing communication among the care team is a particular strength of Cincinnati Children's holistic approach. Goldscheider said this is especially important for patients whose developmental trajectory changes as rapidly as it does in children.

The program has served as a model for hospitals throughout the country seeking to upgrade their pediatric pain management programs. Additionally, team members conduct research on the outcome of chronic-pain treatment, looking for patterns and themes that will help practitioners to fashion better treatment plans. The team also is cooperatively working to edit a book on practical pediatric pain management for primary care physicians with Gary Walco, Ph.D. of the Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital in New Jersey.

Goldscheider knows why his pain management program, which last year served about 11,000 children suffering from acute pain, gets consistent high marks in patient satisfaction.

One key reason is innovation. The division's Procedural Management Program undergoes regular reassessments by families, physicians, and the nursing staff with the goal of improving its current care models. Among other things, the program aims to lower the distress of chronically ill children by:

- focusing on schedule design that maximizes clinic flow and reduces NPO time
- training its clinic nurses in recovery room skills and limiting the number of anesthesiologists and proceduralists to enhance continuity of care and improve communication and standardize treatment
- serving children undergoing radiation therapy and patients with epidermolysis bullosa undergoing whirlpool debridements

An interdisciplinary approach to care is also seen in its Chronic Pain Clinic, where core staff comprises pain APNs, pain physicians, psychologists, and physical therapists. Patients and families at the clinic receive an initial assessment by the entire team as well as integrated follow-

up care through weekly team meetings. The clinic collaborates closely with the orthopedics, GI, Neurology, and PM&R departments, and is integrated with hemangioma and vascular Malformation and epidermolysis bullosa clinics, both which are themselves interdisciplinary.

The division's accomplishments have captured the attention of others, including other institutions and media outlets. For example, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, which plans to devise a similar program, has visited the division to observe its structure, philosophy, and operations. Meanwhile, the hospital's director of palliative care has been working with programs nationwide to glean the best ideas for providing palliative care.

Division members are active within the hospital and the larger community. For example, divisional APNs design the nursing pain education efforts at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital. Division members also consult on or design hospital policies on pain assessment, treatment, and side-effect management.

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