Weisman Children’s Rehabilitation Hospital & Voorhees Pediatric Facility

Improving the lives of children through innovative, collaborative and coordinated care

For decades, Weisman Children’s Rehabilitation Hospital (WCRH) and Voorhees Pediatric Facility (VPF) have been positively impacting the lives of children with medical needs in South Jersey and beyond.

The renowned facilities’ multi-disciplinary approach relies on cutting-edge technology provided by highly skilled medical professionals to maximize positive outcomes for children in a patient- and family-centered environment.

The nationally acclaimed VPF was founded in 1982, when the State of New Jersey asked South Jersey native Barton Weisman to pilot a program designed specifically for pediatric long-term care. Under the direction of Weisman and his son Andrew, VPF became the state’s first freestanding, inpatient facility for medically fragile children with the nation’s first on-site Specialty Pediatric Ventilator Unit.

Realizing that families still had to travel out of state to receive short-term, acute rehabilitation for their children, the Weismans then founded Voorhees Pediatric Rehabilitation Hospital. The facility was soon renamed Weisman Children’s Rehabilitation Hospital to honor its founding family.

The mission at VPF has remained the same since its founding: to advance the full life potential of medically fragile children by providing excellent holistic care in a supportive environment. By maintaining a commitment to this mission, VPF has grown to 119 inpatient beds and has the largest freestanding Pediatric Ventilator program in the country.

Patients at VPF are cared for in a nurturing and home-like atmosphere that is filled with attentive nurses, therapists and dedicated administrators. The facility’s state-of-the-art respiratory care program offers an alternative to acute-care hospitalization by providing innovative and advanced options for mechanical ventilation and airway clearance, explains VPF’s Administrator Scott Goldberg.

“We specialize in non-invasive ventilation, ventilator weaning and decannulation. We also offer six direct-observation units with a continuous presence of nursing and respiratory care practitioners for children who require constant supervision due to critical airways,” says Goldberg. “We’ve created a model of care unlike anything else in the United States and set the national standard for excellence in pediatric long-term specialized care.”

The highly acclaimed VPF model encompasses a broad range of medical care, including highly skilled nursing, respiratory services, rehabilitation services, therapeutic recreation, social work and a pediatric dietitian. The facility is led by Medical Director and Pediatric Pulmonologist Caitlin Papastamopoulos, MD, who has been named an SJ Magazine Top Doc for Kids numerous times.

VPF has also expanded to include The Bancroft School at Voorhees Pediatric Facility, an on-site private school for med-
ically fragile/technology dependent children. Featuring five classrooms and a 2:1 student-to-staff ratio, the school is the first New Jersey Department of Education-approved private school located within a pediatric specialized-care facility. VPF also houses Voorhees Pediatric Facility Medical Daycare and Voorhees Pediatric Rehabilitation Services.

“At VPF, we continuously strive for excellence in the delivery of progressive and innovative pediatric specialized care by embracing technology and new ideas in order to meet the challenges of a constantly shifting healthcare climate,” says Goldberg. “We’re also constantly communicating and promoting commonality between VPF and Weism an to maintain the highest standards of care for our patients.”

“At Weism an Children’s Rehab, our mission is simple: to help children and families reach their highest potential,” explains COO Mike Rosia k. “We are the only full pediatric rehabilitation continuum in South Jersey providing seamless delivery of care to infants, children, teens and young adults up to age 21. At the center of our continuum is an 18-bed specialty hospital offering pediatric short-term, acute rehabilitation in an intimate, family-centered environment.”

Some of Weism an Children’s notable inpatient programs include Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Pulmonary Rehab, Orthopedic/General Rehab, Burn/Wound Care, Diabetes Management, Amplified Pain, and a Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) program. The programs are tailored to each patient’s specific needs, and to better accommodate patients of all ages, Weism an recently renovated a treatment area for teenage patients to include more age-appropriate technology and equipment. All programs also encourage parents or caregivers to be present and active in their child’s care.

“We have invested a great deal of time and effort to ensure coordination of care throughout the community,” says Rosia k. “One of the ways we’re able to accomplish this is through our telem edicine initiative, which allows us to coordinate with community physicians and therapists. This communication and collaboration benefits patients and makes community re-entry much easier.”

Care at Weism an Children’s is provided by a compassionate and diverse medical staff of pediatric therapists and clinicians, including Dr. Papastamelos and Medical Director, Connie Domingo, MD. Domingo, who is a board-certified pediatric physical medicine and rehabilitation physician, has also been named a Top Doc for Kids by SJ Magazine several times.

“Working collaboratively with Dr. Papastamelos, while treating our medically complex patients, allows for improved care coordination when transitioning the patient and their family back to their community providers,” says Domingo. “This partnership ensures improved outcomes in the medical care of our patients. But most importantly, the collaboration provides both patients and families with a solid foundation as they continue on their journey post-acute care.”

The transition from rehabilitation to community re-entry is aided by Weism an Children’s expert care coordinators, says Hospital Administrator Kathy Hall-Olsen.

“Our team of care coordinators follows each patient back to the community as they re-integrate and adjust to their new normal at home, daycare, or school,” says Hall-Olsen. “We continue to support them by providing outpatient therapy services and community activities like adaptive aquatics, our concussion management program and social skills groups.”

Weism an Children’s offers outpatient rehabilitation at its Marlton location, along with facilities in Pennsauken, Washington Township, Northfield and most recently in Vineland. For children with a skilled nursing need both VPF and Weism an Children’s offer medical daycare for children between birth and age 6. These facilities are located in Voorhees, Vineland and Pennsauken. Each facility gives parents and caregivers peace of mind that their child is receiving personalized care along with the tools they need to learn, develop and build social skills through daily activities.

“Though healthcare is a rapidly changing environment, we continue to put patients and their families first,” says Hall-Olsen. “Both Weism an and VPF function with a terrific team mentality to accomplish what’s most important for each child.”

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