

In the FOREFRONT

from St. Christopher's Hospital for Children

Fall 2010



Fetal echocardiograms are among the comprehensive services offered to expectant mothers who are referred for care to the Regional Fetal Evaluation Center at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children.

Regional Fetal Evaluation Center Provides Comprehensive, One-Stop Care

The Regional Fetal Evaluation Center (RFEC) at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children provides comprehensive, coordinated fetal care in cases involving high-risk pregnancies or prenatally diagnosed anomalies.

"We understand that this can be an emotionally difficult time for families, and we do everything we can to support mothers during pregnancy," says neonatologist David Sorrentino, M.D., Co-Director of the RFEC and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Drexel University College of Medicine. "The mother or her obstetrician makes one call to St. Chris, and we take it from there, coordinating with all the pediatric specialists who may be needed to care for the baby. As a first-class pediatric hospital with specialists from every discipline, we can handle any kind of medical diagnosis—from the most common to the most rare and complex."

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BREAKTHROUGH
DISCOVERIES IN
MEDICAL RESEARCH
FOR CHILDREN

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3601 A Street
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215-427-5000

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Meet Lorri Collins, B.S., R.N., Coordinator

No expectant parent wants to discover that their child is experiencing medical challenges while still in the womb. But those who find themselves in that situation will receive guidance and assurance from Lorri Collins, B.S., R.N., Coordinator of the Regional Fetal Evaluation Center at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children.

"I'm here to help the family in any way I can," says Collins. "Some will come in for tests and have normal results, and others will require follow up testing throughout pregnancy as well as services after delivery. Families know they can call me with any concerns—and they do."

Collins began working at St. Christopher's in April as the first dedicated, full-time coordinator of the Regional Fetal Evaluation Center. A registered nurse, she worked as a paralegal, project coordinator for an insurance company, and as a cytogenetic technologist prior to obtaining her nursing license.

"It's an unusual combination of jobs, but I've found that each of them have helped prepare me for this role," says Collins, who adds that she always wanted to work with children.

Married with three children under the age of 10, Collins says that the most rewarding aspect of her job is the relationships she establishes with patients and their families.

"The positive feedback I've received from families means the world to me. It's my privilege to be a part of their family for as long as they need me." ■

Comprehensive Diagnosis and Treatment for Fetal Anomalies

Because congenital heart defects are the most common type of birth defect, the Regional Fetal Evaluation Center (RFEC) at St. Christopher's Hospital works closely with the sections of cardiology and cardiothoracic surgery.

"Heart defects can range from a simple defect, such as ventricular septal defect to a complex defect, such as hypoplastic left heart syndrome," notes Shuping Ge, M.D., Chief of the Section of Cardiology and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at

Drexel University College of Medicine. "By identifying these conditions prenatally, it allows for better counseling for the family, better prenatal care and better collaboration between the teams involved in prenatal care. All of these should translate into better care and outcomes once the baby is delivered."

Heather Ball was referred to the RFEC after an ultrasound revealed a hole in her son's heart.

"Lorri Collins, the Center's Coordinator called me back right away

with an appointment, met me as soon as I walked in the door, and stayed with me throughout the visit," said Heather. "She's been with me through my entire pregnancy. Her support has been phenomenal."

While at the hospital, Heather met with cardiologist Sharon Weil-Chalker, M.D., Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Drexel University College of Medicine, and cardiac surgeon Achintya Moulick, M.D., Chief of the Section of Cardiothoracic Surgery

Regional Fetal Evaluation Center Provides Comprehensive, One-Stop Care

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"Our approach allows families to get connected to the specialists they'll be dealing with ahead of time," notes general surgeon Shaheen Timmapuri, M.D., Co-Director of the RFEC and Assistant Professor of Surgery and Pediatrics at Drexel University College of Medicine. "It's the unknown that is most anxiety-provoking for parents-to-be. Seeing the facility and meeting with the specialists who will be caring for their child helps alleviate a lot of fear and apprehension. At

other facilities, the baby may be whisked away and taken to a hospital that the parents have never seen and treated by physicians they've never met."

Lorri Collins, B.S., R.N., the RFEC Coordinator, guides each family through the process, which can involve a fetal MRI, fetal echocardiogram and consultations with subspecialists.

"I escort moms to all of their appointments, which usually are scheduled on the same day for maximum convenience," says Collins. "I also keep

in contact with them throughout their pregnancy. This relationship becomes especially reassuring for a mom after delivery, in the event that her baby needs to be transported to St. Chris while she remains at the hospital where she delivered."

The RFEC acts as the primary care physician for the mother-child unit, working closely with obstetricians to coordinate their patient's fetal care.

"Our goal is to allow moms to stay with their obstetricians and

“They prepared me for the best and worst outcomes so that I would truly be able to make well-informed decisions.”

Heather Ball, *parent*

and Associate Professor of Surgery and Pediatrics at Drexel University College of Medicine.

“They prepared me for the best and worst outcomes so that I would truly be able to make well-informed decisions,” said Heather, whose son was also diagnosed prenatally with Down syndrome. “They explained to me that my baby would have a heart murmur and problems breathing, and that they would have to do cor-

rective surgery when he was between three and six months old.”

The RFEC maintains continuity from prenatal diagnosis through when the baby is discharged to go home. “The Regional Fetal Evaluation Center assures that the family understands what to expect and the hospital is prepared to care for the baby well before the birth occurs,” says Dr. Moulick. ■

maintain that relationship,” says Collins. “Some other fetal programs require moms to give up their OBs and use theirs instead.”

In most cases, mothers deliver at their home institution. In emergency situations, St. Christopher’s has partnered with a nearby hospital for deliveries that must take place in the immediate vicinity. However, these are the exception rather than the rule.

Administrative Director Alexis Perri, M.S.N., R.N., N.E.-B.C., notes that since its inception last summer, the RFEC has seen demand for services increase greatly. “Our monthly referrals

have tripled since the program began,” she says. “I think this reflects the excellence of care as well as our emphasis on developing and maintaining strong personal relationships with all of our families. While we are seeing more patients, we are still able to provide them with exceptional and timely care.” ■

For more information about the Regional Fetal Evaluation Center, or to refer a patient, please contact Coordinator Lorri Collins at 888-546-6402 or 215-427-5521.

At Wit’s End, a Mom Finds Answers at St. Christopher’s Regional Fetal Evaluation Center

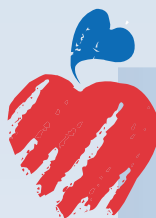
When Carol Poindexter came to the Regional Fetal Evaluation Center at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children in the 34th week of her pregnancy, she and her husband were beyond frustrated.

Carol had been receiving fetal care at another hospital because her baby had multiple kidney cysts, but the experience had left her upset and confused.

“Each doctor had a different diagnosis,” says Carol, a former

emergency medical technician. “Nobody seemed to be on the same team.”

She was also taken aback when one physician told her she’d seen anomalies worse than her daughter’s. “She may deal with this type of situation all the time, but this was new and frightening territory for us. She didn’t seem to understand how we were feeling.”



StChris Care at Bucks County

affiliated with St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children

Bucks County Multispecialty Practice Opens

St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children announces the opening of its fifth multispecialty center. Located in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, the center offers pediatric cardiology, general

surgery, neurosurgery and orthopedic care for patients from birth to 21 years of age. Additional specialties will be added in the future.

StChris Care at Bucks County is located at 301 Oxford Valley Road, Yardley, PA. To make an appointment, or for more information, please call 1-888-ST-CHRIS.





Regional Fetal Evaluation Center Coordinator Lorri Collins (far left) works closely with families like the Poindexters to coordinate care and provide support and guidance.

Weeks later, after being sent home following premature labor, Carol decided to get a second opinion and made an appointment at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children. In addition to dealing with the kidney cysts, Carol also knew that her baby had a heart defect.

"From the moment I stepped inside, I felt like a VIP," she said. "Coordinator Lorri Collins met me at the front door and helped me entertain my 20-month-old daughter, who was with me. We went from one appointment to another, and all the doctors took the time to explain what they saw on the tests. It was clear everyone was on the same page."

At the previous facility, Carol had been told that her baby's cyst would be drained by needle while she was in labor. But her physician at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children determined that was not necessary.

Audrey was born two weeks later. She was transferred to St. Christopher's for monitoring, and discharged after four days. Her urologist felt it best for Audrey to grow and gain some weight before undergoing a kidney function test. At that point, it will be determined whether Audrey requires surgery.

"I like their approach," says Carol. "Cut and slice isn't always the answer."

Audrey also has an appointment with a cardiologist to evaluate her left ventricle dysfunction and heart murmur.

Carol said she was impressed with the seamlessness of the process.

"Before Audrey was discharged, they had everything arranged—her prescriptions had been called in to the pharmacy, her first pediatrician's appointment was set up and her next cardiology appointment was made," she said.

They also made her an appointment for a week later to monitor Audrey's weight gain.

"After we went home, I received follow-up calls to see how Audrey was doing—and how I was doing. And when I went to our first pediatrician appointment ready to recite Audrey's lengthy medical history, I discovered that St. Chris had provided all her records to her pediatrician's laptop so the pediatrician was completely up to speed."

"Everything went so smoothly," she added. "St. Chris' program is like a well-oiled machine." ■

St. Christopher's Welcomes New Physicians

Cardiology

Cardiologist Rula Balluz, M.D., M.P.H.,

is the newest member of the Heart Center at St. Christopher's Hospital staff. Dr. Balluz comes to St. Christopher's from State University of New York at Stony Brook, where she was an Assistant Professor of Pediatric Cardiology. Prior to that, she was a Pediatric Cardiologist at Baptist Medical Center in Alabama.



Rula Balluz, M.D., M.P.H.

Dr. Balluz received her medical degree and masters in public health from the American University of Beirut, Lebanon. She completed pediatric training at the University of Tennessee and a pediatric cardiology fellowship at Tulane Medical Center. She is board-certified in Pediatrics and Pediatric Cardiology.

Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine

Neonatologist Kirstie Marcello-Donnelly, M.D.,

has joined the Section of Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine. Dr. Marcello-Donnelly received her medical degree from State University of New York, Upstate Medical University in Syracuse and completed her pediatric training at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and A.I. DuPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Delaware. Dr. Marcello-Donnelly completed fellowship training in neonatal-perinatal medicine at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.



Kirstie Marcello-Donnelly, M.D.

Neonatologist Ogechukwu Menkiti, M.D.,

has joined the Section of Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine. Dr. Menkiti received his medical degree from the University of Nigeria Medical School. Dr. Menkiti completed his pediatric training at the University of Dublin College Of Medicine, University of Limerick College of Medicine and Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center at Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University in New York, where he served as chief resident. He completed fellowship training in neonatal-perinatal medicine at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. ■



Ogechukwu Menkiti, M.D.



Carolyn Jackson, Chief Executive Officer

St. Christopher's Hospital Welcomes New CEO

Carolyn Jackson has been appointed chief executive officer of St. Christopher's Hospital for Children. Jackson brings a successful track record in hospital operations and development to St. Chris and is an exceptional hospital leader with an unquenchable desire for continuous improvement.

Jackson joined Tenet Healthcare Corporation, St. Christopher's parent company, in 2002. Most recently she served as chief executive officer of Lake Pointe Health Network in Rowlett, Texas, which includes a 112-bed hospital plus two outpatient imaging centers, two sleep labs, a wound care center, an urgent care center and four physician clinics. While at Lake Pointe, she was instrumental in completing a number of major capital projects including a new 14-bed intensive care unit and a new endoscopy suite.

Jackson excels at developing new and innovative programs that meet the needs of the community. Under her leadership, Lake Pointe began the development of an interventional cardiology and open heart surgery program. She also implemented a pediatric hospitalist program and expanded the hospital's neonatal intensive care unit.

The mother of 21-month-old twin girls, Jackson said she grew increasingly interested in pediatrics after becoming a mother. After visiting St. Christopher's last year to learn more about the Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit—something Jackson was in the process of expanding at Lake Pointe—she was impressed with what she saw.

A Newark, Delaware native, Jackson jumped at the opportunity to lead St. Chris—personally she's happy to return to the Philadelphia region and be closer to family; and professionally, she can focus on pediatric specialty care—her newfound passion.

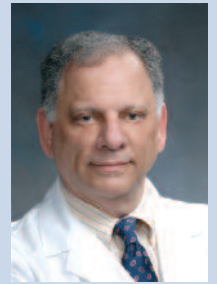
"I am looking forward to advancing the quality, high level pediatric care that physicians have come to trust for their young patients," says Jackson. "I am also planning a number of additional initiatives that will improve access and communication with community pediatric providers and ultimately make care more accessible and convenient for families."

Jackson received a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Delaware in Newark and a master's degree in business administration from Harvard Business School. She is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives and was recognized as one of the *Dallas Business Journal's* 2010 "40 Under 40." ■

St. Christopher's Welcomes New Section Chiefs

New Chief of Ophthalmology Joins St. Christopher's

Ophthalmologist Robert Spector, M.D., has joined the staff of St. Christopher's Hospital for Children as Chief of the Section of Ophthalmology. Dr. Spector, who specializes in treating comprehensive eye problems in infants and children, is a Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology and Pediatrics at Drexel University College of Medicine. He is board-certified in Ophthalmology and Neurology.



Robert Spector, M.D.

Previously, Dr. Spector served as Director of the General Ophthalmology Clinic at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. He served in the Department of Ophthalmology at Yale University and was a community attending physician and surgeon at Hill Health Center in Connecticut. Most recently, he was an attending physician at Eye Surgical Consultants, LLC, in Connecticut.

Dr. Spector received his medical degree from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland, Ohio. He completed his pediatric training at Cleveland General Metropolitan Hospital and ophthalmology training at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. Dr. Spector completed fellowships in Neuro-Ophthalmology, Pediatric Ophthalmology and Cornea and External Disease at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami. He then completed a fellowship in Refractive Surgery at Hunkeler Eye Centers in Missouri. ■

St. Christopher's Welcomes New Chief of Neurosurgery

Neurosurgeon Prithvi Narayan, M.D., has joined St. Christopher's Hospital for Children as Chief of the Section of Neurosurgery. Dr. Narayan, who specializes in treating surgical problems related to the skull, brain, spinal cord and peripheral nerves in children, is an Associate Professor of Neurosurgery and Pediatrics at Drexel University College of Medicine. He is board-certified in Neurological Surgery.



Prithvi Narayan, M.D.

Dr. Narayan comes to St. Christopher's from Princeton Brain and Spine Care, LLC, where he was an attending neurosurgeon. He served as Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Maria Fareri Children's Hospital at Westchester Medical Center and Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery and Pediatrics at New York Medical College, Valhalla. Prior to that, Dr. Narayan served as attending neurosurgeon at Mount Sinai Hospital, New York, and Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery and Pediatrics at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York.

Dr. Narayan received his medical degree from Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis and completed his neurological surgery training at Emory University's Department of Neurosurgery in Atlanta. He then completed a fellowship in pediatric neurosurgery at St. Louis Children's Hospital, which is affiliated with Washington University School of Medicine. ■



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"This is definitely an interdisciplinary endeavor. One of our principal roles is to facilitate communication between the various subspecialists and the parents, as well as with the referring physicians."

Shaheen Timmapuri, M.D.,
RFEC Co-Director

A Comprehensive Approach to Care

After receiving a referral from an obstetrician or maternal-fetal medicine specialist, the Regional Fetal Evaluation Center (RFEC) at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children coordinates all aspects of care, bringing in the appropriate subspecialties for each particular case. The RFEC most frequently interacts with the following specialties:

- **Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery:** These specialists oversee the diagnosis of neonatal cardiac disease through cardiology consultation and fetal echocardiography. They also utilize cardiac catheterization and expert surgical care in the reconstruction of congenital cardiac anomalies and structural defects. Examples of these anomalies include atrial and ventricular septal defects, tetralogy of Fallot,

transposition of the great arteries and hypoplastic left heart syndrome.

- **General Surgery:** General surgeons participate in the care of patients with congenital anomalies including but not limited to: intestinal atresias; congenital diaphragmatic hernias; abdominal wall defects such as gastroschisis and omphalocele; and chest lesions such as pulmonary sequestrations and congenital cystic adenomatoid malformations.
- **Neurology and Neurosurgery:** These specialists care for babies with nervous system disorders including neural tube defects, meningomyelocele and hydrocephalus. St. Christopher's also has a multidisciplinary Spina Bifida program.
- **Orthopedics and Orthopedic Surgery:** While most orthopedic conditions

do not need to be addressed prenatally or immediately after birth, orthopedic surgery specialists are called upon for management and correction of conditions such as limb abnormalities and club feet.

- **Plastic Surgery:** St. Christopher's comprehensive cleft lip and palate team is commonly called upon to evaluate RFEC patients.
 - **Urology:** Urologists address conditions such as posterior urethral valves, renal abnormalities and hydronephrosis in fetuses.
- Our radiology department utilizes a state-of-the-art MRI to assist specialists to more accurately diagnose and develop interdisciplinary treatment plans for patients with fetal anomalies.

In addition, genetic counselors work with parents of



Shaheen Timmapuri, M.D.

fetuses with multiple anomalies to explain their child's condition and potential developmental issues. The goal is to have parents feel more comfortable and knowledgeable about their baby's condition.

Finally, the Transport Team coordinates bringing infants to St. Christopher's Hospital for treatment, whether upon delivery or at a later time.

"This is definitely an interdisciplinary endeavor," says Shaheen Timmapuri, M.D., RFEC Co-Director. "One of our principal roles is to facilitate communication between the various subspecialists and the parents, as well as with referring physicians." ■