

Contact:
Shannon McCormick
O: 614.932.9950 / M: 614.477.2719
shannon@mediasourcetv.com
Alayna Curry
321.843.1343
Alayna.Curry@orlandohealth.com

SURVEY FINDS VAST MAJORITY OF PEOPLE THINK HOSPITALS SHOULD ALLOW PARENTS TO STAY WITH THEIR CHILD DURING TRAUMA CARE

Hospitals that adopt a policy allowing parents in trauma room are seeing the benefits

Orlando, Fla - When a seriously injured child arrives at the trauma center at [Orlando Health Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children](#), the patient's parents are ushered into the trauma room alongside the medical team. The policy to allow parents to be present during care is not the norm among pediatric trauma centers, but a new national survey by [Orlando Health](#) shows that the vast majority of people think it should be. The survey found 90 percent agree that parents should be able to stay with their child during treatment for a life-threatening injury or condition.

"Many hospitals are hesitant to allow parents in the trauma room because medical personnel worry they'll be a distraction, but those who have changed their policy have found that not only do parents do just fine in those difficult situations, but their presence is actually very valuable," said [Donald Plumley, MD](#), a pediatric surgeon and medical director for pediatric trauma at Arnold Palmer Hospital. "Parents help guide our critical care decisions by providing information on their child such as allergies, medical history and details on their injury or condition."

Plumley said parents are also able to help keep patients calm, which oftentimes allows the trauma team to forgo sedation or administer less pain medication.

At Arnold Palmer Hospital, parents are accompanied by a dedicated staff member who is there to support them and keep them informed. "While I'm taking care of the child, a chaplain or social worker is taking care of the family and explaining what's happening every step of the way," said Plumley. "It's a partnership that has allowed us to seamlessly integrate parents into trauma procedures."

Traditionally, parents are asked to stay in a separate waiting area, which can add to their anxiety about their child's status. Plumley says it's extremely rare for a parent to choose to wait outside when given the option. "It's very difficult for a parent to watch their child go through an emergency medical situation, but about 95 percent opt to be in the room," he said. "It's much harder for them to be in a waiting area knowing that their child is scared or in pain and not knowing anything about their condition or what is being done to treat them."

Lynette Ancona and Brent Downs experienced this firsthand after they received a phone call that their 10-year-old son, Jonah, had an accident on the school playground and was rushed to the hospital in an

ambulance.

“We had very little information when we arrived, but we were able to follow Jonah into the trauma room,” said Downs. “The doctor told us exactly what was happening as they took images of Jonah’s broken leg and told us that he would have to have surgery.”

Jonah’s mom says seeing the expertise of everyone in the room helped to put her at ease. “Every single medical professional we came in contact with in that room was doing everything they could to help him, and we weren’t excluded from anything,” Ancona said. “Seeing the care that he was receiving really helped my confidence level go up.”

Plumley says over the past several years of developing the process, parents have become an integral part of trauma care, and he hopes that more hospitals will benefit from including them. “We now feel that parents are part of the team,” said Plumley. “When a patient comes in, it’s like a well-oiled machine. Every person on the medical staff has their place and their tasks, and that now includes the parents to the point that I look for their input when treating a patient.”

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Courtesy: Orlando Health Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children

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ABOUT ORLANDO HEALTH

Orlando Health is a \$3.8 billion not-for-profit healthcare organization and a community-based network of physician practices, hospitals and outpatient care centers across Central Florida. The organization is home to the area’s only Level One Trauma Centers for adults and pediatrics, and is a statutory teaching hospital system that offers both specialty and community hospitals, including Lakeland Regional Health Systems, which joined Orlando Health October 1, 2017. More than 3,000 physicians have privileges across the system, which is also one of the area’s largest employers with more than 23,000 employees who serve nearly 155,000 inpatients, more than 3 million outpatients, and more than 4,500 international patients each year. Additionally, Orlando Health provides more than \$345 million in support of community health needs. More information can be found at www.orlandohealth.com.

ABOUT ORLANDO HEALTH ARNOLD PALMER HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN

Orlando Health Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children, supported by the Arnold Palmer Medical Center Foundation, is a 158-bed facility dedicated exclusively to the needs of children. Located in Orlando, Arnold Palmer Hospital provides expertise in pediatric specialties such as cardiac care, craniomaxillofacial surgery, gastroenterology, nephrology, neurology, oncology, orthopedics, pulmonology and sports medicine. The Bert Martin’s Champions for Children Emergency Department & Trauma Center at Arnold Palmer Hospital is part of the only Level One Trauma Center in the area, and is the first facility in Central Florida to provide emergency care exclusively for pediatric patients. Visit www.arnoldpalmerhospital.com to learn more about all of our specialties.

