



NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases Center for Children

by Jennifer Kirby

Parents of children who have special needs have not always been able to achieve "one-stop shopping" convenience at hospitals. But when it comes to complex orthopedic and neuromuscular conditions, the NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases Center for Children's four divisions and an array of physicians work together to come up with the most effective, individualized treatment options for their patients. The Center is the brainchild of pediatric orthopedic surgeon David S. Feldman, MD, who serves as its director. After treating children with such complex conditions as cerebral palsy, for example, Dr. Feldman felt limited in his ability to provide comprehensive care.

"Parents seek many options and need to be able to focus on a comprehensive plan for their child," Dr. Feldman explains. "There is a need to put the health professionals who treat the same diseases together so that they all can collaborate and work together for the child."

In this multidisciplinary setting, the Center treats children with conditions including cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, limb deformity, scoliosis, clubfoot, spina bifida and Down syndrome. Less complicated yet serious injuries, such as broken bones and ligament and tendon injuries, are also treated. "Physicians of all disciplines, nurses, therapists and social workers all contribute to fulfilling the

goal of the child reaching his or her optimal function," Dr. Feldman explains. "We are all striving for the same thing."

The Hospital for Joint Diseases is world-renowned for its expertise in orthopedics. Its commitment to pediatric care is demonstrated by the **Wallace B. Lehman, MD, Center for Pediatric Orthopedic Surgery**. This state-of-the-art facility treats children with clubfoot, bone and soft-tissue tumors, congenital dislocation of the hip, sports injuries, pediatric fractures and similar conditions. The Lehman Center is comprised of outstanding surgeons and medical staff members who are leaders in the areas of research and education. The surgical staff also utilizes the newest, most advanced techniques while providing exceptional care for their patients.

The Elly Hammerman Center for the Treatment of Neuromuscular Disorders works with children and young adults who have an array of life-long conditions. This major section specializes in the treatment of cerebral palsy, spasticity, dystonia and arthrogryposis. Treatment options range from non-invasive to surgical intervention. As options for treatments, the Hammerman



Above: Dr. David S. Feldman, Director of the NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases Center for Children examines a patient

Center utilizes revolutionary techniques such as intrathecal lioresal pumps, botulinum toxin-A injections for spasticity and selective dorsal rhizotomies.

The New York Institute for Limb Lengthening and Reconstruction (NYILLAR) corrects limb-length inequalities and deformities of upper and lower extremities in children and

adults. It is dedicated to improving function, decreasing disability and preventing, or at least forestalling, arthritis in children. The orthopedic surgeons, therapists, nurses, anesthesiologists and pain management doctors associated with NYILLAR work together to provide patients with the best care possible for their complex conditions. Treatment plans, whether they involve surgical intervention or

diatric Medicine. It strives to help children and young adults who have serious neurological and orthopedic conditions by evaluating their needs for equipment, bracing, physical and occupational therapy and psychological and speech therapy. The goal of this section is to assist and encourage patients to reach the highest functional capacity of their motor, intellectual and social skills.

The Hospital For Joint Diseases is currently dedicating two floors, totaling 25,000 square feet, to the construction of a new Center for Children facility; it is scheduled to open in the Spring of 2003. The new facility will feature a separate entrance and elevator for children and their families in

order to avoid unnecessary contact with adult patients and other hospital programs. The Center also features an interactive play area to teach children about their conditions and encourage them to look forward to visiting a hospital or doctor.

The Center will implement a "white-coat-free" policy. The medical staff at the Center will no longer wear traditional white coats or hang stethoscopes from their necks. The point is to minimize the anxiety children often feel when visiting a hospital or doctor.

"Parents and their children seem so much at ease in our center," Dr. Feldman says. "We are offering numerous modalities in a child-friendly environment. I know that the Center will set the standard for other pediatric institutions across the country and the world."

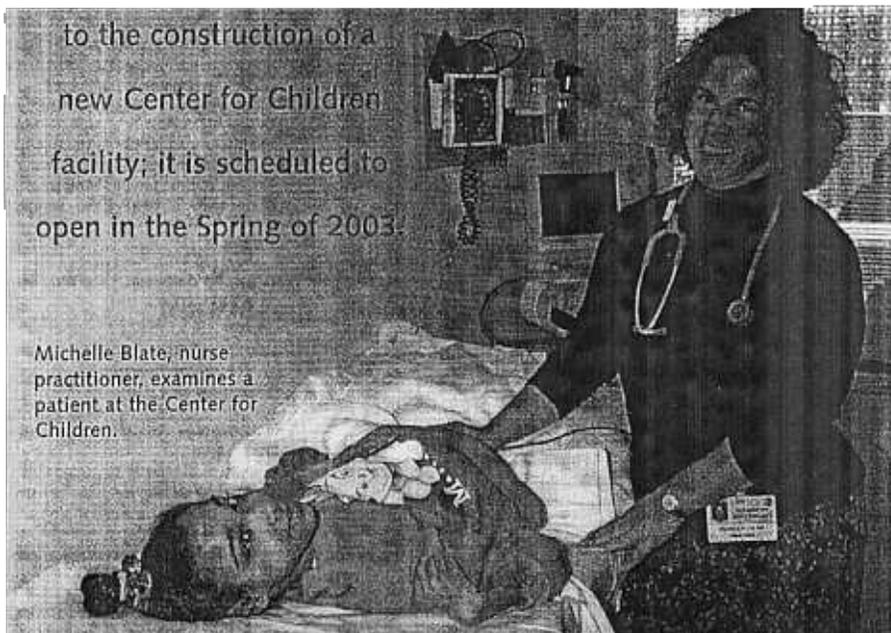
As the new Center nears completion, Dr. Feldman's former feelings that pediatric services were fragmented and inefficient have faded. "We can make a real difference in the lives of children and their families. Children feel better, play better, learn better and, most important, are happier. That is what makes this effort by the entire team so worthwhile." **EP**

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Michelle Blate, nurse practitioner, examines a patient at the Center for Children.

minimally invasive procedures, are designed to best fit each person's needs. NYILLAR leads the way in the correction of limb deformities by utilizing computer-assisted devices to correct discrepancies accurately.

The Center for Children's fourth major division is the **Center for Pediatric Rehabilitation and Pe-**



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