

Fragile Times



PEDIATRIC INTERIM CARE CENTER

Seek the wisdom of the ages... but look at the world through the eyes of a child.

A MOM'S STORY

When you meet her, you want to ask yourself how this sort of thing happens...

She is someone's daughter. She is loved. Still young, you can see she might have been quite pretty, but life's difficulties have begun to show on her face.

A few weeks ago, she was nine months pregnant and alone. She didn't have the ability nor the resources to deliver her little one anywhere but on the side of the road. When a good samaritan came upon her, she was already dressed, sitting by the road and holding her minutes-old child. Though the baby was cold, the paramedics assured her that he would be fine. It was at the hospital that it became apparent this little one had been exposed to drugs in-utero. Though mom was still recovering from giving birth, she was exhibiting behaviors that suggested some form of mental illness.

It breaks your heart to look at her tiny newborn as he lies in a warming bed at PICC. What a beginning to a new life! He is very tremulous and has that high-pitched cry that is so common to newborns prenatally exposed to opiates. Thankfully, he is at a healthy weight, but with a low heart rate he will require careful monitoring. Now, just a couple of days old, you wonder what life has in-store for him and his mother.

Diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, mom, like so many, has become one of the forgotten. Without her medication, she is very sick and at times, psychotic. It is estimated that 30% to 59% of women abusing drugs are suffering from PTSD stemming from a history of repetitive childhood physical or sexual abuse. People with PTSD are likely to have additional conditions, including major depression and anxiety disorders. Many turn to drug abuse to numb the hopelessness. In addition, it has been found that people with PTSD, coupled with substance abuse, are at increased risk for social problems, such as long-term unemployment, poverty and homelessness. Furthermore, the average life expectancy of people with the disorder is less than those without, due to increased physical health problems and a higher suicide rate.

At PICC, we recognize the *many, many* avenues that can lead to a woman's drug addiction. Never can we stand in judgement of any of our moms. They are our children. Many have made bad choices about using drugs, many have survived traumas, that to them, can only be silenced by drug use; many are ill, either physically or mentally. We must always remain compassionate to every one of their lives; there is always a story.



But, sometimes we do have to cry, both for the baby and the mother.

PICC Conference on Prenatal Drug Exposure

Pediatric Interim Care Center (PICC) is honored to welcome world-renown pediatricians Dr. Loretta Finnegan and Dr. T. Berry Brazelton as keynote speakers for its Conference on Prenatal Drug Exposure October 15, 2009, at the Seattle Airport Hilton Hotel and Conference Center.

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Conference on Prenatal Drug Exposure (continued from page 1)

Dr. Finnegan is internationally known for developing the landmark Finnegan scoring for Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome. The author or coauthor of more than 160 scientific publications on such topics as the pharmacologic effects of illicit substances in fetal and maternal populations, Dr. Finnegan has delivered over 900 presentations in the U.S. and abroad and has been a visiting professor in 18 foreign countries. She was formerly Director of the Women's Health Initiative and Medical Advisor, Office of Research on Women's Health, National Institutes of Health. Dr. Brazelton is the best-selling pediatrician/author of more than 40 books on child development, founder of Brazelton Touchpoints Center at Children's Hospital Boston, and Professor Emeritus at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Joshua Sparrow, Associate Director of Touchpoints and coauthor of six books with

What is MRSA?

Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus is a type of bacteria that has developed due to the overuse of antibiotics to combat staph. Commonly called MRSA, it is a multi-drug resistant type of bacteria that is able to exist on its own for months. Once limited to people with weak immune systems in hospitals and nursing homes, is increasingly being seen in healthy adults and children and is believed to be carried by 1 in 3 people. Periodically, we have it enter our doors with one of our little ones.

MRSA is very contagious. Most commonly, it enters the body through a skin wound and can lead to pneumonia and more serious infections, including those in the bloodstream and the bones. MRSA can look and feel like a filled blister, a spider bite or a large, red, painful bump under the skin. Many times, it can be a wound that has become swollen, hot and filled with pus. In all cases, it should be immediately attended to by a physician. If a newborn at PICC is diagnosed with it, he is immediately placed in isolation until the concern is gone.

The spread of MRSA infection can occur in any setting where there is crowding, skin-to-skin contact, individuals with cuts or abrasions, contaminated items (clothing, equipment) and surfaces. There are many simple and effective ways to prevent MRSA. Most include good hygiene, frequent washing of hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer, covering of skin wounds, and avoiding the sharing of personal items.

Dr. Brazelton, will co-present.

The all-day conference will focus on the identification, management and protection of infants prenatally exposed to drugs. PICC Cofounder and Executive Director Barbara Drennen will share her unique knowledge and perspective gained through the care of more than 2,500 drug-exposed newborns at PICC, the nation's only center devoted to the specialized care of drug-exposed and medically fragile newborns.

Congressman Dave Reichert will welcome guests to the conference, which is supported by a grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children and Families.

The conference is designed for medical personnel, social service providers, and others who work with infants and children impacted by drugs. There is no charge for the conference, but pre-registration is required and a donation of \$50.00 to support the work of PICC would be appreciated.

Registration is available online at picc.net or by calling Elaine Purchase, 253-852-5253. Space is limited.

LUNCHEON MOVES TO SHOWARE CENTER

We have some exciting news about PICC's next luncheon. We are moving to the new ShoWare Center in Kent. It is a big, beautiful facility, home of Seattle Thunderbirds Hockey, and we will have it all to ourselves for our luncheon on May 14, 2010.

We'll be right on the arena floor (minus the ice, of course) with a delicious catered lunch and a \$1.5 million Jumbotron to show our videos. It's going to be great fun and a chance to see this new event center in our community. Mark your calendar for May 14 and get ready for PICC's best and biggest luncheon yet!

WHEN YOU PLAN FOR YOUR OWN FAMILY, REMEMBER OUR BABIES, TOO

Would you consider including a charitable gift to PICC's babies as a part of your estate planning?

In times when many are concerned about out-living their assets, a planned gift may provide a way to leave a larger gift than you could make outright. If you have ever thought, "I wish I could give more," planned giving may allow you to achieve that gift without jeopardizing your future. Planned charitable gifts can also provide a number of significant tax benefits.

For information on PICC's Planned Giving Program, please contact Elaine Purchase, 253-852-5253, or elainep@picc.net.



VOLU-FEED

Many visitors comment on the type of baby bottles that they see us using to feed our little ones. A Volu-Feed is a baby bottle that is used mostly for newborns that are premature or, in PICC's case, have feeding difficulties associated with pre-natal drug use. A 2 ounce cylinder-shaped bottle, it is designed to flow easier and make monitoring intake amounts more accurate. Because of it's small capacity, it also limits the air that can be taken in by the baby; lessening any upset to the baby's gastric system. Abbott Laboratories has been generously donating Volu-Feed bottles to PICC for many years.



Babies are such a nice way to start people!

From Barb's Desk...

After nearly 20 years and 2,500 newborns, I am constantly learning about new drugs that our beautiful little ones are impacted with while in utero. I could say that nothing surprises me after all these years, but that wouldn't be a true statement. I am continually taken back by how these tiny newborns survive the insults they received while in utero. These past few months, we have seen more than the average number of premature infants (18 out of 28 babies) come to us with *opiate* exposure. Normally, it is infants exposed to cocaine or methamphetamines that are premature. Opiate exposed infants are usually full term and typically weigh six pounds and above. The opiate exposed babies we are seeing today are weighing only three to five pounds and require special attention due to their size and the high levels of morphine needed to withdraw. What is causing the number of premature births? Is it a combination of drugs; the concentration of drugs; the cut of the drugs or the way it is ingested? There is definitely something new on the street

Each day brings us challenges and rewards. At times it can be quite puzzling when, what we thought to be, is not as it has been. At PICC, we never quit learning.

But, to be here and to be able to hold these tiny neonates just hours after birth and to help them through this period of their life is such a heartwarming experience. Though at times, heartbreaking and sad, I believe my staff and I have the best job in the world.

Barb Drennen
Executive Director

Yes, I would like to support the Pediatric Interim Care Center, The Newborn Nursery

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Special Instructions _____

Enclosed please find my donation in the amount of:

\$ _____

Check enclosed

Please charge my credit card:

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MasterCard

Number _____

Expiration Date _____

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Donations are tax deductible within the guidelines of the law. Please check with your financial advisor.

PEDIATRIC INTERIM
CARE CENTER

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To:

"Whatever they grow up to be,
they are still our children,
and the one most important
of all the things we can give to them
is unconditional love.
Not a love that depends
on anything at all except
that they are our children"

Rosaleen Dickson

Thank You!



To PICC's family of supporters:

Please accept our sincere thanks for not forgetting about the newborns that we have in our care during these tough economic times. Your generosity in donations, both financially and in-kind, allows us to continue to provide the care so needed as these little ones go through the withdrawal process. We would also like to recognize the school age children of our community. We continue to be touched by their giving nature. This past year so many groups, classes, schools and individuals have given so much of themselves to help the babies at PICC. *Again, thank you!!*



SERVICES

Providing immediate, short-term medical care for medically fragile infants suffering from prenatal drug exposure, in addition to providing educational and support services to the community in the recognition and management of substance abused children.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Barbara J. Drennen

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FRAGILE TIMES

This newsletter is published as a community service by Pediatric Interim Care Center (PICC). Its contents are intended to be informative and offer insight into the problems facing many of our children born today.