

Fragile Times



IMMUNIZATIONS

Over the past few years we have seen more parents choosing to not vaccinate their children. Here at PICC, concerned about these decisions, our Medical Directors, Dr. Peyton Gaunt and Dr. Harry Harrison collaborated on the following letter to help inform parents on the risks associated with not immunizing their children. We wanted to share it with you.



Dear PICC Parents, Family Members and Caregivers,

We know that you want nothing but the best for your child to stay healthy without taking undue risks that might harm him or her.

It is possible that you may have been misinformed by some celebrities, friends or internet sites which often provide anecdotal stories which are not based on scientific facts but on coincidental events. You should know that there is absolutely no scientific evidence to support the choice not to protect against preventable infectious diseases by refusing to immunize your child.

For instance, for several years many families declined to give MMR (Mumps, Measles and Rubella) vaccine because of the concern that it might increase the risk of autism. Some worried that the preservative Thimerosal was the cause but it was removed from all infant vaccines more than 10 years ago. And the MMR vaccine has been examined by many carefully preformed scientific studies, with each and every one of them proving that it does NOT cause autism. In short, the majority of vaccines have absolutely no serious side effects and the MMR vaccine risk is possibly 1 in a million compared to the 1 in 1000 risk of getting brain damage if a child contracts measles disease.

Although it is your choice whether to fully immunize your child, you may not be knowledgeable about the risks involved to your child by not immunizing against some potentially serious infections which may cause discomfort, possible permanent disability and even be fatal. Although these infections are not nearly as common as they were just a few years ago, there is substantial risk that your child could still become ill from them for the following reasons: Washington state currently has the lowest immunization rate in the nation and we routinely receive immigrants from foreign countries where some of these diseases are more common, both of which have led to recent epidemics of and deaths from whooping cough and measles in the state. It is also possible your child may someday travel to other countries where there is an even higher risk of being exposed to deadly germs.

If you continue to decline to immunize your child fully, we ask you to give the same amount of attention to this issue as you do for other safety issues for your child, e.g. do you use a booster seat or a seat belt for your child in the car? Do you teach your child to stop and look both ways before crossing a street? The potential harm of not immunizing can be compared to ignoring these other basic precautions you routinely take.

Dr. Peyton Gaunt & Dr. Harry Harrison

PEDIATRIC INTERIM CARE CENTER

Always smile back at little children.

To ignore them is to destroy their belief that the world is good.





Barbara Drennen and Denise Schmidt

TRANSITION

It has been a little over a year now since I turned over the day-to-day management of the nursery. Absolutely no one, including me, thought that the day would ever come that I would be able to hand the care of my precious little ones over to someone else. As hard as it was, I have never regretted one day of entrusting the nursery over to Denise Schmidt, RNC-NIC, my new Director of Nursing. She has always shared my passion for the babies and the importance of providing for the safety and well being of our little ones who don't have a voice.

Oh, don't get me wrong, there isn't a day that goes by that my heart doesn't ache to have a baby sleeping soundly in my office or to be able to hold a little one that is hurting. But, when I go into report with my

staff to hear how the babies are doing, I am so reassured and confident that all is in good hands.

I still am wearing my "Executive Director" hat and find myself as busy as ever - still fighting for the babies! Though it is not as "touchy / feely" as when I was in the nursery with the babies, it is still very rewarding knowing that they are being so well cared for. I look back and wonder how I did both jobs of running the nursery and administration! The administration portion of this job is a full time one on its own!

I continue to travel, teaching the care of pre-natal exposed infants to both hospital workers and caregivers, which, to me, is extremely rewarding. It is interesting to learn what drugs are impacting other states and how the other medical communities are managing their babies.

Just this past week my staff and I met with the head of DSHS, Children Services and numerous legislators. I was anxious to

show them where they are sending their children who are in need of our services. It was a great meeting. We appreciated their openness about the challenges the state is facing in funding areas where children are concerned and that we were given the opportunity to share some of our financial struggles in these economic times.

- Barbara Drennen

WALK FOR THE BABIES



Thank you to the 300 participants who turned out for PICC's Walk for the Babies on October 4th at Kent Station. The walk-a-thon raised more than \$24,000 for the care of infants recovering from pre-natal drug exposures in PICC's Newborn Nursery. The colorful parade filled Kent's sidewalks for a 5K walk that wound past PICC and around a loop on the Interurban Trail. The day finished with prizes and bowls of Duke's chowder back at Kent Station.

Special thanks to the Walk for the Babies sponsors: Kent Station, Bank of America, Walmart, DirtFish Rally School, Oakpointe, and Duke's Chowder House.



This year send the Christmas card that makes a difference and give a heart-warming gift at the same time.

During the holiday season, when you make a donation (minimum \$10) to PICC in a recipient's name, we'll send you our 2014 Christmas gift card to personally sign and send. The card's inside message says: "As a special gift to you, I have made a donation in your name to Pediatric Interim Care Center. This contribution will provide special care for babies recovering from prenatal drug exposures in PICC's Newborn Nursery this holiday season." Order cards on PICC's website (picc.net), by mail (328 4th Ave S, Kent WA 98032), or by calling 253-852-5253.

2013 LUNCHEON

Seahawk Superbowl Champion Doug Baldwin scored a big one for the babies at PICC's luncheon May 9 at ShoWare Center. Serving as keynote speaker and autographing Seahawk memorabilia for auction, Baldwin helped boost the luncheon fund-raising over \$140,000—the highest total in the luncheon's history and nearly a third more than last year.

Speaking to the audience of more than 750 supporters, Baldwin reflected on an evening he spent visiting the babies recovering in PICC's nursery. "As I was holding that baby, I realized—These babies will grow up one day. They'll become your neighbors, your co-workers, your friends. They'll become people you rely on."

"It doesn't matter who you are," he said. "It doesn't matter what your status in society is. It doesn't matter if you win the Superbowl or not. The reason we're all here is because we are human beings, and we have a passion for bettering the lives of others, especially those who cannot better their lives themselves."



Seahawk Doug Baldwin

Michelle Esteban, KOMO News Anchor/Reporter, emceed the program. Auctioneer Larry Snyder led the bidding for the Super Seahawk Auction, including a framed 12th Man Flag signed by 28 members of the Superbowl team. The flag was donated to PICC by Jimmy Wu, CEO of Allflight Corp., an aerospace company in Kent.

The luncheon was hosted by PICC's Board of Directors, with special thanks to the dedicated table captains, donors, and sponsors who contributed the event's success. Title Sponsors were Moneytree, Muckleshoot Charity Fund, and Tecton Corporation – A Property Management Company. Patrons and Table Sponsors were LMI Aerospace, Specialty Warehouse, Commencement Bank, Holland America Line, Allflight Corp., Coatings Plus, Auto Warehousing Company, Hooked on Hydronics, MultiCare Health System, Dr. Peyton Gaunt & Denise Johnson, The Birth Center at Valley Medical Center, Board Member Nancy Elop, Taylor-Thomason Insurance Brokers, Rhodes & Associates PLLC, Table Captain Lisa Kimmet, Newberry Realty, and Sound Publishing.



Follow us on Facebook

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..... Visa

..... MasterCard

Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Name on Card _____

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



METABOLISM

Many children who are exposed to their mother's substance abuse while in utero, may show very little or no effects at all. This can be quite often, due to the child's metabolism. Because each child is individual, they each metabolize substances differently. Some newborns may be heavily impacted by her mother's drug use; another not at all. It would be very detrimental to believe that because a child has had a certain type of exposure, this is how the child is going to be affected and to proceed to treat each one the same.

An important factor to take into account is the type of drug or drugs to which the child has been exposed to. Different types of drugs have differing effects. Another consideration is that every little one is born with their own personality and idiosyncrasies.

Do not look for effects. If they are there, they will present themselves without you looking for them. If you have educated yourself properly, you will recognize them within the first week of life.

Opiate drug exposure (prescription pain medications, heroin, methadone) is one of the easiest to recognize because of its outward signs. Witnessing tremors, excessive crying, increased muscle tone and irritability are the most common effects seen with this type of exposure.

Cocaine exposed infants quite often fall through the cracks because they do not have outward symptoms like the opiate exposed child. They appear healthy and can be easy to care for. What stands out for this type of child is that they often will not wake to feed on their own, may not appear hungry and many times will fall asleep after taking just a small amount of formula, making them at risk for failure to thrive.

Methamphetamine exposed infants are similar to a cocaine expose infant but many times, what sets them apart, is their excoriated buttocks due to the chemicals being excreted through their stools. These newborns may also have feeding difficulties. They too, do not go through the type of withdrawals an opiate exposed infant does.

At PICC, we require all caregivers to be educated in the craft of caring for this population of newborns. We believe that they must have the skills necessary to provide the best possible start in life for their baby, before taking him into their home.

MEET SARAH

My first visit to PICC was as a 15 year old girl. I came with a group to donate quilts we had made for the babies. Barbara gave us a tour and I was forever impacted. I knew then that I wanted to someday, foster, adopt, make a difference and in some way be a part of PICC.

In 2001, newly married and attending college during the day, I applied at PICC for a night shift position. Within a week I began as a nurse's aide and was taught how to care for these precious little lives.

I left PICC in 2004. Since that time the years have been very busy & full! I opened a ballet school, my husband & I became parents of a daughter and a son, and we became foster parents. In 2009, we fostered and later adopted a little girl who had been at PICC. A year later we adopted her little brother, and two years after that we adopted our 5th little one. But still... the center was never far from my heart.

Recently, I was offered a position at PICC to do what I love the most: Go out and talk to everyone who will listen about this amazing center. I will be helping raise funds and awareness about PICC and its mission. If your club is interested in having me speak, please call. I can be reached at 253-852-5253 or by e-mail at Sarah@picc.net.





Denise Schmidt, PICC's Director of Nursing
with Jennifer Strus,
Assistant Secretary for Children's Administration

MY DREAM CAME TRUE

The first time I heard about the Pediatric Interim Care Center and what they did for the babies, I knew I had to be a part of it.

I was in nursing school, with a baby of my own, when I saw a news clip about PICC on television. It was at that moment, I knew what I was going to do after I graduated from nursing school...I was going to work at PICC!

When I graduated from nursing school I went to PICC and Spoke with Barbara Drennen, the co-founder and Executive Director. She graciously let me know that PICC was not an appropriate place for a new grad without experience. I asked her to give me a chance to learn from the nurses at PICC and I would work for free while I trained. She kindly let me know that the nurses at PICC operate with much autonomy and need to have a good knowledge base and experience to draw from in order to work at PICC. She told me to get some experience and come back and see her. So that is what I did. I worked as an RN in a busy family practice office for five years. Then a

friend of mine let me know there was an opening for a nurse at PICC. I immediately called Barb. She brought me in for an interview and this time, she hired me. I was thrilled. I loved the job as much as I thought I would. I knew I belonged at PICC.

I spent the next five and a half years working one on one with Barb and the babies at PICC. Near the end of those five years, Barb talked to me about the possibility of someday taking over for her in the nursery as the director. At that point, I knew I needed to expand my knowledge and skill. I went to work in the area hospitals in the Special Care Nursery and NICU for the next ten years. My love for PICC remained in my heart and spread to my family. My daughter worked as an aide at PICC when she graduated from high school before going on to college. My husband served on the Board of Directors for PICC.

I would visit periodically through the years. Then, one day, to my surprise Barb called to ask me if I would be interested in coming on as the Director of Nursing and manage the nursery. That was a year ago in September. Everyday is a chance for growth and learning for me, and I am grateful everyday, that I am where I belong....at PICC with the babies!

-Denise Schmidt

OLD FRIENDS MEET AGAIN

Twenty-five years ago I was privileged to meet Dr. Loretta Finnegan who is nationally recognized on the care of drug exposed infants. Dr. Finnegan's name is synonymous for the score sheet she designed that is used worldwide to evaluate the level of withdrawal a newborn may be in and whether he/she may need medicinal support. Through the years we kept in touch especially when I needed help understanding the particular needs of a baby. She also was one of our honored speaker at a conference that PICC hosted in 2009. A few weeks ago, in Florida, I was fortunate to meet up with her again. We were both speaking at a national conference regarding children who had been prenatally exposed to mother's substance abuse. Also, at this conference, I had the honor to introduce Dr. Finnegan to my new Director of Nursing, Denise Schmidt.



Barbara Drennen with Dr. Finnegan



PEDIATRIC INTERIM
CARE CENTER

328 4th Avenue South
Kent, WA 98032

*Our babies are not “addicted”.
Their mothers are.
Babies prenatally exposed
to substance abuse
are “affected” or “exposed”.*

HONORED VISITORS TO PICC



In early October we were honored to have Mr. Kevin Quigley, DSHS Secretary and Jennifer Strus, Assistant Secretary for Children’s Administration take time out of their busy schedules to visit our center. We were proud to show them the safe, home-like environment where their babies are placed at PICC and to have the opportunity to talk about what we are observing with today’s infants struggling through drug withdrawal.

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

PHONE NUMBERS & ADDRESSES

Phone (253) 852-5253
Fax (253) 852-5728
Email: picc@picc.net
328 4th Avenue S.
Kent, WA 98032
www.picc.net

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.