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Children's HeartLink to Collaborate with Lucile Packard Children's Hospital on Cardiac Training Visit and Parent Education Effort in India

Medical volunteers will provide treatment and training at Innova Children's Heart Hospital in Hyderabad, India, and work with Innova nurses on new materials for parent education and follow-up care

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (June 13, 2011) -- From June 27 to July 1, Children's HeartLink will send a team of volunteers from Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford University on a cardiac training visit to Hyderabad, India. Medical volunteers will work side by side with Innova Children's Heart Hospital staff to help diagnose and treat children, assisting with approximately five to six life-saving operations, performing numerous diagnostic catheterization procedures and consulting on specific areas of care such as intensive care nursing.

This will be Children's HeartLink's third full-team cardiac training visit to Innova Children's Heart Hospital. A key objective of this mission is to continue the Parent Education/Discharge Instructions (PEDI) project, training nurses at Innova in effective ways of providing practical information about follow-up care to family caregivers of pediatric heart patients.

The PEDI project was developed by a group of Children's HeartLink volunteers who realized that in many developing countries, parents do not have the opportunity to be as involved in their child's care as they do in the developed world. The program is designed to help children receive the best possible care by better integrating their parents into the treatment process. The project tools include educational booklets on preparing for a hospital stay and post-hospital care. Ultimately, Children's HeartLink hopes to implement the PEDI program in many of its partner hospital locations in China, Malaysia, Vietnam, Ukraine and Brazil, as well as India.

"The parent education initiative has already been a great success. We've received wonderful feedback from our partners in India, and with this visit, we are introducing additional illustrated materials to help inform low-literacy families in how to best care for children following open-heart surgery," said Elizabeth Perlich Sweeney, president of Children's HeartLink. "By leveraging and mobilizing the strengths of a broad, diverse network of contributors, we have created something unique and valuable. Parents all over the world are united in their quest to help their children. They need only to have the knowledge."

During the training visit the team will also:

1. Work with the Innova team to identify their pediatric cardiac program's specific needs and what assistance is required from Children's HeartLink volunteers.
2. Use teaching, case review and treatment to improve cardiac care diagnostic and technical skills.
3. Offer observations and recommendations on Innova's current pediatric cardiac services and plan for future collaboration opportunities to advance pediatric cardiac services.
4. Support Innova in its efforts to reach out to the broader South Indian community to provide children with cardiovascular screening services and to provide primary care providers, cardiologists and nurses with continuing education in early detection, screening and post-operative care.

About Children's HeartLink

Founded in 1969, Children's HeartLink is a nonprofit organization partnering with health care centers in underserved regions of the world to promote sustainable cardiac care for children with congenital or acquired heart disease. Congenital heart disease is the world's most common major birth defect, affecting one in every 120 children. Nearly ninety percent of those newborns are in areas of the world where appropriate medical care is inadequate or unavailable. Children's HeartLink currently supports partner hospitals and programs in eight countries: Brazil, China, Ecuador, India, Malaysia, South Africa, Ukraine and Vietnam. To learn more click on: www.childrensheartlink.org.

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