

Pediatrics on the Move

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The second such center in the country at the time, this one program has rendered an invaluable public service in teaching both public and physician about the prevention and treatment of the tragic poisonings of children. This 24-hour a day service allows a physician anywhere to call Duke, find out immediately the poisonous ingredients of one of the hundreds of unlabeled products used in homes that are harmful and be given instructions for proper treatment.

One of the latest additions to the many new programs of this department is the in-teaching plan established in 1959 through the interest of Dr. Dees. A specially trained teacher is now available to keep school-age patients up to date with their studies during prolonged hospitalizations. This program has proved a blessing to everyone concerned: teachers at home, parents, ward personnel, as well as the patients themselves who suffer extreme boredom (and worry about their school work) after a while.

Throughout the history of the department of pediatrics three goals have guided its growth: teaching, service to children and research. In the early years, of course, most attention was given to the service to children, but just as soon as personnel and space was available attention was given to all three of these goals. As the staff and number of patients increased the need for space became more and more pressing, as anyone who has been around Duke for any number of years recalls only too well! The department's first big breakthrough in the problem of space came in 1957 with the opening of the new out-patient clinic in the basement of the "new addition" to the hospital. These bright new spaces were sorely needed because of what Dr. Davison called the "pediatric shift." This refers to the trend toward the treatment of children on an out-patient basis rather than on an in-patient basis. More preventive medicine and better methods of treatment make hospitalizations unnecessary except for more serious or long-term illnesses. Thus the new OPC gave the pediatric

department their first of several dramatic updatings.

In 1958 the department received vitally needed research space in the new addition to the Bell Building. While most of us find this addition less exciting than the additions to clinical space, the fact is that research space is vital to a healthy, growing department in these times.

Most dramatic of all is the opening this summer of the renovated and expanded Howland Ward, which has almost doubled the capacity for in-patients. Delightful in every respect, this "race-track" type ward has the most modern devices available for the best and most comfortable care of the patient seen most frequently at Duke: the difficult diagnostic problem, the child with chronic disease and the child requiring specialized procedures.

The completely air-conditioned ward for 55 children features an outer ring of rooms for patients that open into a corridor built around a central area containing nurses' stations, treatment rooms and other special facilities. One of the special features is the "controlled environment room" where heat and humidity can be regulated and the air specially filtered. Believed to be the first of its kind in North Carolina, the room will be used primarily in the care of children with asthma and various respiratory diseases.

Of particular interest to parents with children on the new ward is the house physician's room which enables a house officer to be immediately available around the clock in case of emergency. Another spirit-brightener is the large play patio just off the ward where ambulatory children can enjoy the sunshine. The Duke Hospital Auxiliary is furnishing the play toys and an awning that will shade part of the patio and will give rainy weather play space. They will also help the nursing staff supervise the use of the area.

Since Duke Hospital, according to Dr. Harris, has always believed that it is psychologically sound wherever possible for the mothers of patients to be nearby, the inclusion of six mother-child units is of particular interest. This section features rooms

with chair beds for the mother so that she can be comfortable and be right with her child. The cheerful, homey atmosphere of the new Howland would delight another recently retired member of the pediatric department—one who has played so strong a role in the shaping of this department from the very beginning. Miss Mildred M. Sherwood, R.N., supervisor of nurses for the children from 1929 until August, 1960, has been called by Dr. Davison and by Dr. James Cleland (when he presented a portrait of Miss Sherwood to the Hospital in 1949) "the ideal nurse, the outstanding children's nurse in the world, who is interested primarily in the care and welfare of her patients." Although this very shy lady has retired, her mark has been left with the many student nurses and medical students in whom she tried to stress the importance of kindness and charity in the treatment of her children.

And so the opening of Howland and the coming Symposium on "The Commonwealth of Children" in Dr. Davison's honor bring us to the present in the story of the history of our pediatrics department. What of the future? Dr. Harris has something very specific to say about this. He and the rest of the staff would like to see the establishment, as a further honor to Dr. Davison, of a "University Child Health Center."

A University Child Health Center would, Dr. Harris feels, bring to fruition the goal of today's pediatricians—not just to keep our children healthy, but to help each child develop into a responsible citizen capable of working at his optimum capacity. This is a very large order to fill. Such a Center would improve the training of medical students, pediatricians and teachers; materialize a different concept of patient and community service, and facilitate and stimulate research into all phases of child life.

Whether this wonderful tribute to a fine pediatrician materializes within the next few years or not, we can all be proud of our department of pediatrics for the large contribution they have made over the past thirty years and are now making toward the emergence of Duke Medical Center as the honored institution it is today.