Children's Hospital Launches Single Ventricle Program

(PRNewswire-USNewswire) In the United States each year more than 3,000 infants are born with a form of single ventricle heart defect. A single ventricle defect occurs when one of the heart's ventricles is too small or under-developed to pump blood effectively to the body or lungs. Less than forty years ago, single ventricle heart defects were fatal. Today, with early intervention in infancy, most children with single ventricle defects are surviving.

The Cardiac Center at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia has launched the Single Ventricle Survivorship Program in order to research and develop interventions and therapies aimed at improving the quality and length of life for those children who survived surgery for single ventricle birth defects. This program is a one-of-a kind offering to families who have a child or young adult living with a single ventricle heart defect.

"Early corrective surgery can alter the circulatory system and heart of most single ventricle patients allowing them to survive past infancy, in fact many are living into their teens and twenties," says Jack Rychik, M.D., medical director of the Single Ventricle Survivorship Program. " However, many are experiencing serious complications, including difficulty in exercising, growth and puberty delays, liver disease, and gastrointestinal and lung disorders."

Families whose children have surgery or other procedures at CHOP take comfort in knowing the Cardiac Center team and Single Ventricle Survivorship Program will be with them for years, helping immediately if problems arise. The program is open to patients living with a single ventricle from across the region and the entire U.S. The Single Ventricle Survivorship Program is led by Jack Rychik, M.D., but is composed of a multidisciplinary team including cardiologists, gastroenterologists, hematologists, hepatologists, endocrinologists and pulmonologists. The need for a team of this nature is highlighted by the most common complications faced by these patients.

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia was founded in 1855 as the nation's first pediatric hospital. Through its long-standing commitment to patient care, the hospital has fostered many discoveries that have benefited children worldwide.

For more information, visit http://www.chop.edu [1].

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