



Town Hall Frequently Asked Questions

Recently Donna Hyland completed a series of Town Halls at our main campus locations. Below are the top 10 questions employees asked.

1. How will Children's be affected by healthcare reform and the election?

As far as the election goes, Children's really has no political leanings—our platform is kids. And we'll support anyone who supports kids and fights for their health and wellbeing. Regardless of who voters elect, there will be continued pressure on Medicaid and healthcare in our country.

We've already made many adjustments in preparation for the Affordable Care Act. We're really keeping a close eye on what happens to Medicaid and the politicians elected to office will have a hand in determining the program's future.

If Georgia's government declines to accept federal dollars for the expansion of Medicaid coverage, we could potentially see this impact our kids. We're already running on such thin margins, if the state has to trim their budget to accommodate more adults in the Medicaid program, it's going to impact our ability to deliver care to kids.

We're working with state legislators to ensure that they keep this in mind when they're making decisions. Medicaid is not a perfect program, but we're hoping to find improvements that make sense for all involved and that allow us to have no interruptions to how we care for kids.

2. What's the latest with the provider fee/bed tax we hear about in the news in Georgia?

This fee is something that Children's really depends on and it's due to "sunset" in June 2013. There is some controversy around it, stoked by hospitals that don't see many Medicaid patients; the fee favors hospitals that see Medicaid patients by providing them with funding.

Our government affairs team is hard at work to help our politicians understand what this fee means to children in Georgia. This issue is poised for a battle in the next legislative session and we're meeting with representatives from all sides. We're explaining to them that it's really not a tax, it's vital for helping us deliver the best care to all of our patients.

3. What are some of the biggest challenges that Children's faces?

There are three main challenges facing healthcare in Georgia today: Medicaid, access to care and finding talent.

Georgia wants to put its kids first. Parents want to do the same. But we're not seeing data that shows we're meeting our goals. The 2011 Commonwealth Fund State Scorecard on Child Health Performance System ranked Georgia 43 out of 50 states and the District of Columbia when reviewing multiple health indicators including access, affordability, prevention, and potential to lead healthy lives.

A high percentage of kids in Georgia are dependent on Medicaid (1.3 million or well over 50 percent). Unfortunately, Medicaid pays providers poorly and is wrought with administrative complexity. As a result, there is a growing shortage of physicians willing to take Medicaid. We are making every effort to stop this Medicaid crisis and to make sure money is set aside for these children.

Since access to care and Medicaid are closely linked, we are participating in a statewide coalition of pediatric providers, the Pediatric Health Improvement Coalition (PHIC), to work with the state to find a solution to the current Medicaid crisis.

Additionally, fewer physicians are graduating today so the demand for top talent is high. This is why we continue to focus on creating an environment that attracts and keeps physicians at Children's.

Our work is cut out for us, but we couldn't do it without the dedication of our employees.

4. What are our plans for growth / expansion in the next few years?

We're always looking ahead to what's next for Children's. After the successful opening of our new facility in Henry County, we continue to examine trends in Georgia to determine the need for any additional Children's presence.

Our telemedicine program is wildly successful and we'll continue to expand our offerings and explore new avenues for collaboration with care providers around the state.

We're also having lots of discussion with other hospitals in Georgia to determine how and when we might partner together. Remember, it's all about access for kids to the care we provide.

5. Other local hospitals are advertising their pediatric care—how does this impact Children's?

Locally, the environment has certainly grown more competitive. Some hospitals are going after specific groups and patient families, specifically those who are not reliant on some kind of government insurance, such as Medicaid. We see this as a threat to business, but more importantly, it's a threat to the care of children in Georgia.

Children's is here for ALL kids and we're the best for all kids. We have the best staff, the best caregivers and if your child is sick, we're the best option for getting him or her healthy again.

6. What's the latest with parking at Egleston?

Children's has been actively working on a solution to the extreme congestion issue at Egleston for several months. We recently signed an agreement to procure some additional space closer to the Clairmont deck that will help relieve the pressure on parking.

To improve the staff commute, we're also changing shuttle vendors for staff assigned to the Church Lot and will eventually close that lot once the new parking agreement is in place in November.

We have parking and security staff assisting in the parking decks, and on higher census days, we increase staff presence in the decks to help with parking issues. We greatly appreciate the patience of our dedicated staff, and we hope the new parking lot will alleviate some of the parking stress.

We're still looking for solutions and continuing to take staff feedback on the best possible parking options for all.

7. How is our Strong4Life childhood obesity campaign progressing?

We've had an incredibly successful year with the program. In September, we marked childhood obesity prevention month and launched The Talk—a comprehensive campaign with a strong social media component that focuses on parents and arming them with tools they need to have those tough conversations with their kids about eating habits and healthy living.

We're continuing to leverage our clinical expertise with a focus on training. To date we've trained more than 1,000 care providers around the state. We're visiting schools, including 21 schools in Atlanta and DeKalb County. We also held our Strong4Life Camp this summer and saw incredible improvements in the BMI rates for participants.

8. What can you share about our new partnership with Emory?

Emory remains such a strong partner for us. Each year, we continue to build on a solid foundation, and this year, we're thrilled to strengthen our relationship with them through the formation of our new Pediatric Center.

The Pediatric Center formalizes our relationship with Emory and Emory Children's Center employees will become Children's employees. Children's will manage the clinical side of the operation and Emory will handle the research side, something they do so well already. Together, we'll collaborate on the teaching program.

We're excited to welcome these Emory employees into the Children's family.

9. What are plans for changes at The Park with regard to space, parking and facilities?

We continue to explore options at The Park and with the surrounding areas. The new Park North building is open and several departments are in the process of transitioning to new spaces there. The buildings they leave behind at The Park will be refreshed and additional buildings will receive updates over the next few years to provide more modern work environments conducive to collaboration.

Parking and space are always in demand at The Park. Our facilities team is working hard on delivering solutions to these constraints. They're also developing a master plan to help us continue to evolve in a way that supports our growth as an organization. We're exploring possibilities for construction and new options, including the potential for a clinical care space.

10. How is Children's working to increase our environmental sustainability efforts?

Children's has a robust recycling program in place. Currently we recycle the following items: plastic, aluminum, paper, glass, cardboard, kitchen grease, mechanical grease, wood pallets, motor oil, batteries, light bulbs, paint, laboratory waste, radiology films, lead aprons, water and computers.

For infection control and quality reasons, we do have to provide disposable cups for patient family members and guests. We encourage all our staff to use their own cups, and we've provided many reusable water bottles to employees at our Town Halls and Strong4Life events.

Children's has made dramatic strides to become more green as an organization, and we continue to listen to staff suggestions on how we can improve in this area.

(Read more about our [sustainability efforts](#))