



OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois Earns Accreditation for Adult Congenital Heart Program

Only Accredited Program in the State of Illinois

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Peoria, IL | April 25, 2019) – In recognition of its expertise in serving adults with congenital heart disease (CHD), structural heart conditions present at birth, the OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois Adult Congenital Heart Program earned accreditation as a Comprehensive Care Center from the Adult Congenital Heart Association (ACHA), the highest level possible.

Individuals with CHD, the most common birth defect diagnosed in one in 100 births, are living longer. There are 1.4 million adults in the U.S. living with one of many different types of congenital heart defects.

The OSF Children's Hospital program is the first in the state of Illinois to earn accreditation and one of only 30 ACHA ACHD Accredited [programs](#) throughout the United States.

"There are now more adults with congenital heart disease than there are children in the United States and the ability to care for these adults takes a very robust specialized team approach. At Children's Hospital of Illinois, we have worked together with all of the experts it takes to make sure these patients are getting great care," said Dr. Marc Knepp, Co-Director of the Congenital Heart Center at OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois and Assistant Professor of Clinical Pediatrics at the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria.

"Patients need to follow someone who understands their unique plumbing or their unique heart. Patients aren't always the same four heart chambers that an adult has or the adult cardiologist is used to seeing. So someone who understands the surgery, the history of what has happened to this patient, and what the long-term problems could potential be," added Dr. Knepp in explaining the importance of such a program for adult CHD patients.

Dr. Knepp was one of the first doctors in the United States to receive certification in Adult Congenital Heart Disease from the American Board of Internal Medicine.

As a hospital-within-a-hospital, the team at OSF Children's Hospital works collaboratively with OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center and the OSF HealthCare Cardiovascular Institute for a team approach to care.

Dr. Knepp says that collaboration was key to earning accreditation as a Comprehensive Care Center.

"Not only do we have to understand the congenital part, but the adults with congenital heart disease can actually get acquired problems. So that same problems that you and I can get - coronary artery disease, heart attacks - things along those lines, arrhythmias, we need the adult cardiologist and their expertise to help us work and take care of these patients."

The ACHA is a nationwide organization focused on connecting patients, family members, and healthcare providers to form a community of support and a network of experts with knowledge of CHD.

The OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois Adult Congenital Heart Program received accreditation by meeting ACHA's [criteria](#), which includes medical services and personnel requirements, and going through a rigorous [accreditation process](#), both of which were developed over a number of years through a collaboration with doctors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, and ACHD patients.

Learn more about the Adult Congenital Heart program at OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois [here](#).

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OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois, located in Peoria, is the third largest pediatric hospital in Illinois and the only full service tertiary hospital for kids downstate. With 136 beds and more than 141 pediatric subspecialists, Children's Hospital of Illinois cares for more children in Illinois than any hospital outside of Chicago. Formally established as a pediatric hospital within the walls of OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center in 1990, Children's Hospital of Illinois has over 7,000 admissions, 2,500 newborn deliveries, and 18,000 emergency department visits each year. More at www.childrenshospitalofillinois.org.

The **Adult Congenital Heart Association** (ACHA) is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life and extending the lives of adults with congenital heart disease (CHD). ACHA serves and supports the more than one million adults with CHD, their families and the medical community—working with them to address the unmet needs of the long-term survivors of congenital heart defects through education, outreach, advocacy, and promotion of ACHD research. For more information about ACHA visit www.ACHAHeart.org.