Our Mission
We provide hope, care and cures to help every child live the healthiest and most fulfilling life possible.

Our Vision
Seattle Children’s will be an innovative leader in pediatric health and wellness through our unsurpassed quality, clinical care, relentless spirit of inquiry and compassion for children and their families.

Our founding promise to the community is as valid today as it was over a century ago. We will care for every child in our region, regardless of their family’s ability to pay.

We will:
• Practice the safest, most ethical and effective medical care possible.
• Discover new treatments and cures through breakthrough research.
• Promote healthy communities while reducing health disparities.
• Empower our team to reach their highest potential in a respectful work environment.
• Educate and inspire the next generation of faculty, staff and leaders.
• Build on a culture of philanthropy for patient care and research.

Our Values
Compassion
Excellence
Integrity
Collaboration
Equity
Innovation

Letter from Our CEO
Most people don’t have to look far to find a hospital. After all, there are more than 6,000 hospitals across the United States.

But options shrink dramatically when a family needs a hospital like Seattle Children’s.

Although there are more than 70 million kids under age 18 in the U.S., there are only about 200 hospitals with specialized programs for children and adolescents. Of those, roughly 100 provide comprehensive care for young people with the greatest health challenges.

Along with Seattle Children’s, these hospitals are an essential part of our country’s healthcare system and are a critical safety net for families in need. And, often, we’re the source of hope when they’ve been told there are no other answers.

Like us, our children’s hospital peers provide a wide range of highly specialized programs to meet the immediate and long-term needs of children with complex conditions. We also serve as regional and national referral centers for kids with the most acute medical illnesses and mental and behavioral health conditions.

Across the country, children’s hospitals are united by a simple fact: we don’t do it alone. We work closely with academic medical centers to advance pediatric clinical care, training and research. At the same time, we collaborate with families, community partners, public health agencies and many others to deliver on our promise of hope, care and cures for every child.

That promise is the cornerstone of Seattle Children’s plan to address the greatest health needs of our communities — not just within our walls but wherever we can help keep families safe and healthy and eliminate health inequities.

Inside this report are many examples of our most recent efforts to uphold our promise. We are grateful to everyone who has joined us on this journey.

Sincerely,
Jeff Sperring, MD
CEO, Seattle Children’s

ON THE COVER
Top: We are working hard to bring care closer to your home. Read about our Odessa Brown Children’s Clinic expansion plans on page 12.
Bottom Left: Abel Mersing, a patient from Anchorage, Alaska, thrives after treatment at Seattle Children’s. More about Abel’s story on page 2.
Bottom Right: Our Family Resource Center helps distribute car seats and booster seats to ensure everyone has a safe ride home. Read more about their work on page 11.
What is community benefit?
A community benefit is a program or service that meets at least one of these objectives:
• Improves access to healthcare.
• Enhances the health of the community.
• Advances medical or health knowledge.
• Relieves or reduces the burden of government or other community efforts.

Community benefits are classified as uncompensated care, research, health professions education and community health improvement. Community benefit is also the basis of the tax-exemption of nonprofit hospitals.

Learn more about how we contribute to the community at www.seattlechildrens.org/communitybenefit

Total 2019 Investment in the Community: $287,761,000*

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<td>Community Programs and Services</td>
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<td>Uncompensated Care &amp; Medicaid Shortfall**</td>
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* Does not include grants and contributions Seattle Children’s received that support community benefit programs.
** Reflects costs after subtracting payments from Medicaid, donations, and grants Seattle Children’s received that support these programs.

Learn more about how we contribute to the community at www.seattlechildrens.org/communitybenefit

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Community Programs and Services

We strive every day to do whatever it takes to help children and families in our region — not just inside our hospital but beyond our walls. By working with partners in the community to provide medical services, promote public policies and advocate for the under-resourced, we make life safer and healthier for children and families where they live.

Raising awareness of vaping risks
As a founding partner of Prevention Works in Seattle (WINS), we are on the frontline of the fight against youth substance abuse — including the growing but dangerous practice of vaping.

Vaping — inhaling the vapor from electronic cigarettes — is catching on with teens at an alarming rate. This is at least partially due to the popularity of e-cigarette juice flavors like cotton candy and cherry cola that are extra sweet and marketed as free from nicotine.

“Testing shows that some flavors marketed as ‘just flavoring’ do contain nicotine, making e-cigarettes and vape use among youth extremely dangerous because it lays the groundwork for a lifetime of addiction.” says Liz Wilhelm, Drug Free Communities Coordinator with Prevention WINS. “E-cigarettes also contain dangerous chemicals that, when inhaled, can reduce lung capacity.”

Prevention WINS has partnered with the Washington Poison Center to provide educational training about the risks of e-cigarettes and vaping to local educators, parents and other community coalitions.

One of the most important things to understand is that e-cigarettes and vaping is not safer than combustible cigarettes — especially for young people whose bodies are still developing. “Parents should send clear messages to their children asking them not to use e-cigarettes and let them know the consequences if they do,” Wilhelm says. Through this collaboration, Prevention WINS has educated hundreds of individuals on these risks in 2019.

E-liquids that are used for vaping next to the similarly marketed Cherry Cola drink.

Specialty care closer to home
Seattle Children’s is the main pediatric hospital for a vast geographic region — the largest of any children’s hospital in the country. Our network of clinics gives kids across Washington, Alaska, Montana and Idaho local access to specialty care that could save their life.

When Abel Mersing had a fever that lasted for four days, his pediatrician in Anchorage, Alaska, thought it was an everyday virus. As symptoms worsened and Abel started struggling to breathe, he ended up in the emergency room, where Dr. James Christiansen, a Seattle Children’s cardiologist who lives and works in Anchorage, diagnosed him with rheumatic fever.

“Abel was on the verge of cardiac arrest and no one knew why until we saw Dr. Christiansen,” Mersing says. “He put Abel on the right medications and it probably saved his life.”

While families still travel to Seattle for complex surgeries and procedures, our specialists see thousands of kids like Abel in our regional clinics. Our founding promise to provide uncompensated care to children who need it applies even when a child is seen at one of our regional clinics.

“We’re constantly striving to make it easier for families to get evaluated, diagnosed and treated by Seattle Children’s experts no matter where they live,” says Dr. Howard Jeffries, who directs our regional network. “Families have enough to worry about without wondering whether the specialist they need is available in their community.”
2019-2020 Highlights of Community Programs and Services

- 802 youth received care at school based health centers run by Seattle Children’s Odessa Brown Children’s Clinic
- 2,841 children and teens received free bike helmets and were individually fit
- 3,388 children received low cost car or booster seats
- 2,283 safe firearm storage devices distributed
- 229 children, teens and adults received free or low cost life jackets
- 150 children and families who are homeless received free healthcare at Wellspring Family Services and Country Doctor Community Clinic in partnership with Seattle Children’s
- 230,447 youth athletes cared for by athletic trainers across the region
- 3,790 took part in programs about eating healthy and staying active
- 1,974 individuals received healthcare-related legal advice from the Washington Medical-Legal Partnership
- 54 hours of pro-bono legal advice given by MLP attorneys
- 2,925 rides to and from the airport for patients and families
- 1,405 people served through the Journey Program, which provides grief and loss services

Seattle Children’s Community Benefit Report 2019-2020
Neurology team delivers novel care

The Seattle Children’s Neurosciences Center unlocks the mysteries of the brain to help children fight neurological conditions that threaten their lives and their dreams. Our team of neurologists, neurosurgeons and numerous other specialists take every step possible — including blazing new trails — to help children and teens like Kira Iaconetti fulfill their potential.

Kira has a passion for performing musical theater. So it felt like a cruel joke when doctors determined she had music-triggered epilepsy caused by a brain tumor pressing against her auditory cortex.

Kira needed brain surgery to remove the tumor. Because of the tumor’s location, our epilepsy surgery team took a novel approach. They woke Kira up during her surgery and had her sing and perform music-related tasks while mapping areas of her brain so they could avoid damage to regions related to hearing and singing.

Although we are a leader in this type of surgery — known as awake craniotomy — this was the first time we focused on preserving the ability to sing. Just 48 hours after surgery, Kira was playing guitar and singing from her hospital bed.

“At Seattle Children’s, we deal with the incredible every day,” says neurosurgeon Dr. Jason Hauptman. “We came together and developed a very novel way to approach Kira’s problem that we hope will have a positive impact for the rest of her life.”

Searching for solutions to inequities

Children from low-income groups often have worse medical outcomes than kids who are from higher-income families.

Backed by a National Institutes of Health grant, Dr. Casey Lion is seeking to identify what contributes to those disparities and test a new way to overcome them.

Lion’s team will survey parents of color and low-income parents whose children are hospitalized. The survey will gauge things like a family’s trust in the healthcare system and the quality of communication from doctors and nurses.

Lion’s team then will look for associations between the survey’s findings and each child’s medical outcomes. For instance, Lion suspects that children may have worse outcomes if the providers aren’t effectively communicating with parents, which could limit a parent’s ability to care for their child after going home from the hospital.

Next, Lion will investigate whether patient navigators could improve outcomes. Patient navigators are charged with things like explaining the different aspects of care to patients and their families, helping them communicate with doctors and nurses and encouraging families to take an active role in care.

“Navigators could be a cost-effective way to help these patients today and build a foundation that improves their healthcare throughout life,” Lion says.

“Patient Navigators work as part of the patient’s care team and ensure good communication with providers, patients and family members. Pictured left to right: Diana Navarrete, Michaela Murray, Maria Gruenmay and Blanca Fields.”

Patient Navigators work as part of the patient’s care team and ensure good communication with providers, patients and family members. Pictured left to right: Diana Navarrete, Michaela Murray, Maria Gruenmay and Blanca Fields.
We are ranked **5th** among pediatric institutions in National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding.

**6,397** students received science education from the mobile Science Adventure Lab.

**535** studies sponsored by **169** different entities.

Each study furthers our goal of identifying new approaches for preventing, diagnosing and treating childhood diseases.

**385** student interns and **70** postdoctoral fellows hosted by the research institute.

We are **1 of 31** fully dedicated pediatric research centers in the world.

**175** areas of clinical, translational and community research.

**275** national and international providers, ethicists and trainees attended the annual Bioethics Conference.

**297** principal investigators on staff who are leading research studies.
Health Professions Education

Education is the oxygen that healthcare requires to effectively respond to patient and family needs. Our investment in ongoing training for our doctors and nurses — and for providers in the community — ensures children in our region have access to highly specialized care. As a training ground for future doctors, nurses and health care professionals we ensure future generations will continue to have the same access.

Internships cultivate diversity in research

The Seattle Children’s Research Institute is committed to helping train the next generation of medical researchers — and to helping underrepresented students participate in that training.

Last year, the Office for Teaching, Education and Research (OTER) launched a summer internship program for underrepresented undergraduate students. The program received more than 700 applicants, of which, 36 students were given an opportunity to engage in basic, clinical and/or translational research under the mentorship of experienced researchers and principal investigators. Interns learned new research methodologies, became experienced with lab equipment, worked with data, conducted their own research projects and submitted an abstract of their research at the end of their internship. Projects ranged from the effects of sleep deprivation on epilepsy in a mouse model, the social impact of pediatric skin disorders — to why parents are still refusing and delaying vaccines.

Interns also attended a series of training sessions on reading scholarly articles, writing individual development plans, creating LinkedIn profiles and other useful professional skills. “The area of medicine I was introduced to blew my mind away,” said one intern. “I learned a lot about what it takes to be in that setting and I am glad because (the internship) gave me more motivation to continue this career path.”

Mobilizing to meet community’s needs

Our patient transport service has come a long way. After transporting only neonatal patients — babies younger than 30 days old — for many years, the team began transporting children of all ages last year. Another 2019 milestone: we are also now providing the clinical care on Airlift Northwest flights involving neonatal patients.

Now known as the Critical Care Transport Service, the team has doubled in size to nearly 40 highly-trained nurses, respiratory care therapists and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) dedicated to the safe transfer of patients requiring critical or specialty care services at Seattle Children’s or another facility in Western Washington.

Expanding the program required significant and ongoing training by all members of the team. This included two days of competency trainings in 2019 that involved learning advanced skills and conducting hands-on simulations beyond what is standardly required. This year the team will participate in three days of competency trainings to continue fine-tuning their skills.

“What has been so incredible is how each member of the team has been cross-trained so everyone has learned transport skills rather than just nursing skills or respiratory therapy skills,” says Nicki Nikodym, a nurse with the team. “Our team works so cohesively because it is just that — a team.”
2019-2020 Highlights of Health Professions Education

- 677 professionals trained in suicide prevention
- 65 medical, nursing and psychiatry Grand Rounds lectures given to community providers and offered to a worldwide audience via our video library
- 601 students participated in healthcare job shadows

Providers in Training

- 969 physicians in training
- 727 nursing students
- 37 advanced practice provider students
- 128 pharmacy, social work, dentistry and other students
- 502 medical students

- 532 healthcare providers and state employees were educated on child abuse and neglect prevention

More than 4,000 healthcare professionals participated in continuing education events

Our medical students train at different sites in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Washington and Wyoming
Uncompensated Care

The cost of specialized care for a child with a serious illness or injury is staggering, but it is never a barrier for families who come to us for help. Our doors are always open regardless of a family’s financial situation. In 2019 we provided over $184 million in uncompensated care to children in Washington, Alaska, Montana and Idaho.

A winning attitude, a dedicated team

If you look at Saleea, you see a girl who loves computer games, volleyball and the performer Cardi B. What you don’t see is the sickle cell disease that has shaped her life — or the Seattle Children’s medical team that’s been with her every step of the way.

Our experts at the Odessa Brown Children’s Clinic (OBCC) provide Saleea with the care she needs to manage her chronic condition. Sickle cell disease prevents a person’s blood cells from delivering oxygen to their body, which can lead to terrible pain, serious infections, daily medication and a lifetime of treatment.

“Sickle cell affects the entire child and the team at OBCC understands that,” says Saleea’s dad, Demont. “Even if we need to call for help at 3 a.m., our medical team is there for us. They’re like a second family.”

Saleea’s mom has insurance and her dad works two jobs, but the cost of medication, blood transfusions and emergency room visits is more than the family can bear alone. But they don’t have to, thanks to support from our Uncompensated Care Fund.

“Our lives would be dramatically different without that help,” says Demont. “We feel truly blessed for all the people who step forward and support the hospital — and families like ours.”

“OUR lives would be dramatically different without that help. We feel truly blessed for all the people who step forward and support the hospital — and families like ours.”

— Saleea’s dad, Demont
Our Community Benefit Priorities

We work with partners in the community to address four urgent health needs identified by our 2019-2022 Community Health Assessment. Here are some of our recent accomplishments in each of the four priority areas.

Mental and Behavioral Health

Mental and emotional health are essential in order for children to grow up and reach their full potential. Our mental and behavioral health experts are trained to understand and meet the specific needs of children and adolescents dealing with anxiety, depression and the issues that affect their development, safety and well-being. Working with the community, we strive to increase access to care so everyone gets the help they need.

Cultivating inclusive autism conversations

The Seattle Children’s Autism Center has provided vital education to parents and caregivers for many years. Now these courses, such as Autism 101 and the Autism 200 series, are more easily and widely accessible thanks to a collaboration between the Autism Center and Seattle Children’s social media team.

The courses are streamed on Facebook Live, eliminating the need for anyone to travel to Seattle Children’s or some other location to access the information presented. In addition to being available on Facebook Live, all past lectures are uploaded to our YouTube channel and can be viewed or rewatched any time. Videos in the Autism 200 series have been viewed more than 34,000 times.

Presenting the information on Facebook Live and making it permanently available afterward on social media means that any provider — at Seattle Children’s or in the community — can point families to those resources any time they need education, information or support.

Much of the information is presented through panel discussions. Invited experts address topics across the autism spectrum based on what the Autism Center hears from families about their greatest needs and concerns. “We strive to be as inclusive as possible and offer multiple perspectives from the autism community,” said Jim Mancini, who directs parent education and outreach at the Autism Center.

One of last year’s panels examined crisis resources for individuals with autism, which revealed a lack of aid and started a conversation at the state level about the need for increased crisis supports — which ultimately became a catalyst for positive legislation.
Guiding families through the mental health maze

The mental health system can seem like a maze to parents in search of therapy for a child. Not only does the state of Washington lack adequate resources, but accessing those resources is challenging because of complicated insurance coverages, multiple hidden barriers and minimal supports.

A big step forward was taken last year when Seattle Children’s began operating Washington’s Mental Health Referral Service for Children and Teens. Funded by the state, the telephone-based service connects parents and caregivers with a referral specialist. The specialist asks a series of questions to determine the type of help needed and then finds outpatient mental health services that match a child’s clinical needs, accepts their insurance and is conveniently located.

The Mental Health Referral Service completed 596 intakes in its first six months — with overwhelmingly positive results. When parents were surveyed about how likely they were to recommend the service, the average rating from 105 responses was a 4.9 out of 5.

“This is such a valuable resource for families like ours who are trying to navigate the complicated mental health system and get our children the supports they need,” said one parent. “Thank you so much for your help!”

4.9 out of 5
average rating from 105 responses of parents that would recommend the referral service.
Suicide and Injury Prevention

Seattle Children’s supports the health and safety of children, teens and families by identifying preventable injuries and promoting education and resources to reduce those injuries. Working with partners in the community, we seek to understand injury and address potential harms wherever we find them.

Care during stay and on the way home

When a child spends a long time in the hospital, families spend a long time there too. In many cases, they find themselves in unfamiliar surroundings far from home, family and friends.

Seattle Children’s Family Resource Center (FRC) offers support services for families in hopes to make their stay a little easier. The FRC provides a place to do laundry at no cost, private showers, a kitchen with free coffee and tea, computer access, cell phone chargers, health information and more.

FRC staff help families who are at the hospital navigate services, identify transportation options and find information on things to do. When families are ready to go home, we make sure they travel safe by providing car seats to inpatient and Emergency Department patients. Car crashes continue to be a leading cause of death and injuries to children.

Families pay what they are able to and no more than the wholesale cost of the car seat. Trained FRC staff assist parents and caregivers with car seat education and training. We provided 338 car seats to families last year.

“It always makes me feel good when we are able to help families who need a car seat,” shares Judy Maccarrone, senior program coordinator for the FRC.

Working with families to keep kids safe

The Behavioral Health Crisis Care Clinic (CCC) is an alternative to an emergency department that is designed for children who are in crisis — including experiencing suicidal thoughts or behaviors — but who are not at imminent risk of harm.

Launched in 2019, the CCC provides clinical support to both children and their caregivers in order to address the impacts of a mental health crisis on the whole family. We also provide families with case management support to increase their access to ongoing care in the community. This new program increases options for families in crisis who may otherwise have to choose between visiting the emergency department and navigating lengthy waitlists to access care.

During their time in clinic, families may receive a safe firearm storage device to bring home — along with counsel from staff and providers. This resource extends to patient families in our Emergency Department, Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine inpatient unit, Psychiatry Clinics and Odessa Brown Children’s Clinic (OBCC). Over 250 patient families have received firearm locking devices. At OBCC, providers blend conversations about childhood injury prevention into well-child checks, making sure that families know how to securely store firearms in their homes and have the resources to do so.

In addition, The Protect Our Kids from Firearm Tragedy Coalition continues to work to reduce firearm tragedies by providing safe firearm storage education and devices to communities. In 2019 we distributed 2,033 firearm locking devices at community events in Yakima, Vancouver and Seattle in partnership with local hospitals, Safe Kids, public health and suicide prevention community organizations.
Economic Security

As income inequality grows, we know that more and more of our families lack the resources to maintain a safe and healthy standard of living. Without economic security, children are more likely to enter school behind their peers, score lower on achievement tests and have worse health outcomes. Seattle Children’s works directly with families and with partners in the community to address access to healthy food, housing, exposure to pollution and other issues that can arise from a lack of economic security.

Affordable Housing

A new Seattle Children’s clinic will increase access to healthcare for low-income families who have moved to south Seattle and south King County while at the same time helping boost the supply of affordable housing in the area.

Construction crews broke ground last year on a new Odessa Brown Children’s Clinic (OBCC) — part of the 3.2-acre Othello Square development near the Othello rail station.

The clinic as well as a child development center run by a community partner will occupy the first two floors of a seven-story building. Above the clinic will be 176 apartments for families with incomes between 65% and 120% of the area median income. Children’s invested an additional $8 million to increase the number of units set aside for individuals and families at the lowest end of the income spectrum.

The new clinic will provide an integrated range of medical, mental health, dental and other services while Othello Square will include a charter high school, an economic opportunity center, a computer lab and other features.

The original OBCC, located a few miles north in the Central District, will be renovated and continue to serve families in surrounding neighborhoods.

Assistance with the basics

Food, shelter and transportation are easy to take for granted if you have them, but many families who come to Seattle Children’s lack one or more of those basic necessities — adding to the stress of their child’s hospitalization and making it hard for them to be the best caregivers possible.

Last year we expanded our efforts to assist families by creating a Community Resource Team (CRT) to screen for homelessness, food insecurity and other issues.

The 16 volunteer team members — all pre-med students — work directly with the manager of the program to sign families up for assistance such as SNAP food benefits (formerly known as food stamps), transportation, cell phone, internet and utility discounts and other benefits that offset financial hardships.

Seven CRT students speak a second language. “The beauty of this program is that there is an abundance of pre-med students looking for this kind of experience,” said Julie Povick, who leads patient transportation services and the CRT. “They are all super-excited to be doing this.”
Healthy Lifestyles

Nutritious food and an active lifestyle are cornerstones of a healthy life. Children need plenty of both to grow and thrive. Seattle Children's works with families and partners in the community to fight childhood hunger, promote nutritious diets and foster healthy environments where children can safely get the physical activity they need.

Working at the intersection of hunger and health

In 2019, 12% of people living in King County experienced food insecurity, meaning nearly 250,000 people in our immediate community often run out of food and don't have money to buy more.

People who can't afford to eat healthy and nutritious foods often struggle to manage chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease. A poor diet worsens underlying conditions, trapping them in a cycle of more visits to the doctor, greater financial burden and declining health.

Seattle Children's is working to break that cycle as part of a network of healthcare systems called the Food Insecurity Community of Practice. By improving how we screen families for food insecurity and then connecting those in need with the right resources, the network's 10 members are reducing the burden of disease, the increase in health disparities and the cost of healthcare.

We treat hunger as a vital sign. Every family who comes to our Odessa Brown Clinic for a well-child visit completes a short questionnaire about food insecurity. Patients that screen positive are connected to food assistance programs such as SNAP, WIC or their neighborhood food bank.

In addition, we team up with Northwest Harvest to bring a mobile food pantry to Odessa Brown twice a month and we provide families with produce prescriptions — vouchers for fruits and vegetables that are good at grocery stores and farmers markets.

Reducing race and place-based disparities

As King County's housing costs have soared, many people of color and lower-income families have moved to more affordable locations in south Seattle and south King County.

While moving can lift financial burdens, this displacement disrupts long established communities, separates people from services and often segregates people of color and lower-income individuals and families in areas with fewer resources and more health risk factors.

The result: increased health disparities based on race and place.

To counter those disparities, Seattle Children's is working with Public Health — Seattle & King County and the Healthy King County Coalition to increase access to healthy foods, help residents create active living environments and establish effective links with local health clinics.

Funded by a federal Racial Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant, the effort focuses on African-American, African-born and Asian-American populations in south Seattle and the cities of SeaTac and Tukwila. Comprised primarily of neighborhoods of color that have a long history of welcoming immigrants, they shoulder the highest chronic disease rates in the county.

Projects range from increasing access to healthier foods to providing breastfeeding education and support groups to new African American mothers facing systemic and cultural barriers.
