

# Innovations in Pediatrics

*Rady Children's - A comprehensive system focused solely on children.*



## PEOPLE

### Chris Abe named vice president of operations

Chris Abe, R.N., CIC, HEM, has assumed the role of vice president of operations at Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego, expanding her role as the senior director of ancillary and support services.



Abe will continue to be responsible for her current areas while working closely with Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Nicholas Holmes, M.D., M.B.A., on strategic opportunities for existing and new clinical initiatives. She is already leading the planning for a new Interventional Imaging Center and new 3-D Print Laboratory.

During her 30-plus years at the Hospital, Abe has worked in various managerial positions, taking on a growing list of services and teams to oversee. Currently, she manages the Infection Control Program, Occupational Health and Safety, and Support Services (Environmental Services, Food and Nutrition Services, Biomedical Services, Security), along with the Laboratory, Radiology, Pharmacy, Clinical Nutrition, Cardiology and Neurodiagnostics. She also serves as the Hospital's disaster coordinator.

Among her numerous accomplishments are very low infection rates, the highest influenza vaccination rates for hospital staff in California for the past four years and top scores on The Joint Commission and other hospital surveys. She has made national presentations on various health and safety topics, and was recently named a 2017 Leader of Excellence for Rady Children's.

To meet the challenges of overseeing multiple services and projects, Abe brings together experts on the issues at hand and makes sure they look at the big picture. She likes to think out of the box and be creative, using resources in innovative ways to get the best possible results. Her focus is always on quality and safety, helping to ensure that all patients receive consistently excellent care.

## PROGRAMS

### New Medical Plaza coming to southwest Riverside County

Children and families in southwest Riverside County will soon have expanded pediatric services at a brand-new facility opening in July.

Rady Children's Medical Plaza in Murrieta will provide a wide range of pediatric services, including primary care, specialty services of [Rady Children's Specialists of San Diego](#) and an Urgent Care.



innovation  
belongs in every moment



Various [developmental services](#) will also be offered, including [physical therapy](#), [occupational therapy](#) and [speech-language pathology](#). A [Toddler & Preschool Inclusion Center](#) for children 18 months to kindergarten is scheduled to open in September.

The three-story building is located at 25170 Hancock Ave. (between Murrieta Hot Springs and Los Alamos roads), just off Interstate 215.



[See all of the plaza's services.](#)

## RECOGNITION

### Dr. Starling honored with Outstanding Teaching award

[Suzanne Starling, M.D., FAAP](#), medical director and associate program director of the [Chadwick Center for Children & Families](#) at Rady Children's, was presented with The Ray E. Helfer Society's 2018 Outstanding Teaching Award at its annual meeting in April.

Founded in 1999, the society is an international group of physicians seeking to provide leadership to enhance the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of child abuse and neglect. It has grown to be the primary subspecialty society for physicians devoted to the problem of maltreated children.



The Outstanding Teacher Award recognizes the importance of teaching in the promotion of the scientific and humanitarian aspects of child abuse medicine. In presenting the award, various professionals in this field spoke about Dr. Starling's impact on their careers, calling her an "incredible teacher" and "natural mentor." One doctor said Dr. Starling was the reason she became a child abuse pediatrics physician.

Along with The Ray E. Helfer Society, Dr. Starling's professional society memberships include the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect, the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, where she also has served as chair of the Section on Child Abuse and Neglect.

[Learn more about Dr. Starling and her accomplishments in a previous "Innovations" issue.](#)



## Rady Children's certified as CAR T-cell treatment center

Rady Children's Hospital has become one of approximately 40 treatment centers certified to provide Kymriah (tisagenlecleucel), the first Food and Drug Administration-approved CAR T-cell treatment.

The gene therapy, made by Novartis, is specifically approved for the treatment of patients



up to 25 years of age with B-cell precursor acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) that is refractory or in second or later relapse. The FDA requires special certification for all sites offering the treatment to confirm that the institution is qualified to handle serious adverse reactions, should they occur.

Kymriah employs a combination of cellular therapy, gene therapy and immunotherapy to target and destroy cells expressing the CD19 protein. Patients are treated by collecting their own T-cells, which are genetically modified to target CD19. The new therapeutic cells are then reinfused to the patient. [Deborah Schiff, M.D.](#), a member of Rady Children's [Blood and Bone Marrow Transplantation Program](#) and a clinical professor of pediatrics at UC San Diego School of Medicine, is overseeing the treatment, and patients will be managed by this BMT team.

Due to the high cost of the therapy, Novartis is providing information on financial assistance as well as patient support programs through its KYMRIAH CARES program. Services may include transportation, lodging and healthy meals.

Approximately 3,100 patients age 20 and younger are diagnosed with ALL each year, according to the National Cancer Institute. In an estimated 15-20 percent of patients, the cancer does not respond to standard chemotherapy or returns after initial treatment.



**Read more at [RCHSD.org](http://RCHSD.org)**

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