

# KidSTRONG

By Ronda Kruetzer, RT(R)(MR)

In the fall of 2015, thanks to the AHRA & Toshiba Putting Patients First grant, the radiology department at Ozarks Community Hospital (OCH) of Gravette in Gravette, Arkansas was able to launch KidSTRONG, a pediatric program designed to improve the safety, understanding, and comfort of pediatric radiology procedures conducted at the hospital. The program's purpose was to build confidence in young patients, ease procedure fears, and encourage healthy, strong lifestyles for the organization's youngest patients.

OCH is a health system serving patients throughout northwest Arkansas and southwest Missouri. The system includes two hospital facilities and 17 clinics throughout the region, headquartered between the two hospitals in Webb City, Missouri. Both hospitals are formerly closed facilities, reopened to serve the local need and provide care for the underserved population throughout their respective locations. The health system is a safety-net provider, ensuring access to care for the underserved population of governmental and self-pay patients. More than 80% of the total patient population is uninsured or on governmental insurance.

In 2008, community members in Gravette, Arkansas reached out to OCH administration regarding the closed Gravette Medical Center Hospital, which had served a large pediatric patient population prior to closing. Gravette is a rural community located in the far northwest corner of Benton County and

due to the town's secluded location, access to healthcare was slim. To serve the need of Gravette citizens and those in the surrounding small communities, OCH of Gravette was reopened as a critical access hospital. OCH of Gravette is a 25-bed acute care hospital. Due to its location within the region, the hospital is a necessity for residents in need of emergent medical care. While there are several hospitals located in the larger communities of Bentonville, Rogers, Siloam Springs and Fayetteville, Arkansas, the closest hospital to Gravette is 20 miles away or more. Due to this fact, many small communities surrounding Gravette take advantage of healthcare within this rural community, and OCH of Gravette has a busy caseload of patients spanning a multi-state region including Arkansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, and Kansas.

Following the receipt of the Putting Patients First grant, OCH of Gravette administration determined that an all-encompassing department renovation in radiology would be the perfect complement to the KidSTRONG program. In addition to the purchase of pediatric lead, child-friendly décor and supplies, and pediatric radiology safety education, OCH of Gravette committed to use hospital funds to purchase a comprehensive package of new state of the art radiology equipment to furnish all radiology patient rooms. This new equipment led to the renovation of the radiology waiting room, timed perfectly with grant implementation efforts.

The OCH of Gravette's radiology department and KidSTRONG implementation is an impressive enhancement to the former pediatric program. Pediatric lead in kid-friendly designs ensures that children are getting the appropriate protection without undue weight while reducing radiation. KidSTRONG theme coordinating decals, décor, and equipment create an environment that is both welcoming and engaging for young patients (see Figures 1-4). Kid-sized transportation provides safe and comforting access to and within the imaging department, and age appropriate waiting room play equipment gives children hands-on activities that decrease stress and anxiety. A new, multi-colored lighting system was installed in patient rooms, making the area less intimidating and providing a calming affect for young patients. Pediatric patients get to wear superhero masks and capes prior to their procedures and all patients receive a KidSTRONG themed stuffed animal following their appointments.

The most integral component of the KidSTRONG program is the development and production of an informative video detailing the imaging process to prepare children and parents before an exam. This video is available for families to watch in the waiting room when checking in or through an online portal if an appointment is prescheduled. This instructional video tool includes education on the appointment process geared towards children, with the purpose of reducing anxiety and improving patient

in the industry



Figure 1 • KidSTRONG Themed Decor



Figure 2 • KidSTRONG Themed Decor



Figure 3 • KidSTRONG Themed Decor



Figure 4 • KidSTRONG Themed Decor

satisfaction. The KidSTRONG pre-imaging instructional video can also be made available as a model template for other single-site hospitals, imaging centers, or facilities to develop a tailored instructional video for their unique needs.

The KidSTRONG program has proven to be an asset to OCH of Gravette, with a track record of satisfied patients since the program's start. Parents and children alike feel more prepared for radiology procedures and the thematic elements make a child-friendly, comfortable atmosphere for young patients. A pediatric radiology patient said it best: "I was really scared, but when I walked in the room I saw the blue lights on and stopped crying. It was really cool." The adults visiting the renovated area enjoy the space almost as much as the pediatric patients.

It has improved their overall experience, and gives our staff a chance to further promote our wonderful KidSTRONG program to those who may never have heard about it prior to visiting.

The KidSTRONG program at OCH will help pediatric patients see imaging services as protecting them and helping them be active. It will also provide needed improvement to the existing hospital radiology department and increase community resources, thus enabling local families to access safe, quality and worry free care right in their hometown.

OCH of Gravette would like to thank AHRA and Toshiba for making this vision a reality, creating a positive radiology experience for the region's young patients and helping to launch the radiology department's growth. ☸

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