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Mercy Children's Clinic opens medical home

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Franklin-based Mercy Children's Clinic has opened a medical home for chronically ill children, one of a handful of similar programs in the country.

In the chronic care medical home, young patients are assigned a team of doctors, nurses and a caseworker to track their treatment and progress. The patient is assigned a physician advocate who manages appointments with specialists, physical therapists and family service providers in addition to handling insurance processing.

"Approximately 60 percent of our patients are living with chronic illnesses," Dr. Amy Vehec says in a news release. "Integrating all of the medical issues into a comprehensive plan can be complicated and requires a team that is committed to working together to achieve the best possible outcomes."

Chronically ill children often see several specialists, have multiple surgeries, make numerous trips to the emergency room and are prescribed several medications, Vehec adds.

Mercy Children's Clinic has a staff of more than 40, including seven pediatricians and a child psychologist.

Doctors see an average of 60 patients a day. About 25 percent of the patients have private health insurance while the rest are either uninsured or receive TennCare benefits.

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