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**It's tough waiting for anything when you're a child
But having to wait for a chance at a normal childhood is unacceptable**



Jaydine is three years old and has had trouble breathing since the day she was born. Her mother, Janie, visited a local clinic because Jaydine's loud snoring was alarming. When tests for TB came back negative, Jaydine was referred to ENT specialists at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital in Cape Town, South Africa.

Doctors discovered that Jaydine has a blocked post-nasal passage, which causes her adenoids to obstruct nasal breathing forcing her to breathe through her mouth. Little Jaydine even eats less because she can't breathe while eating. Doctors also found that at times Jaydine's tonsils would also swell completely obstructing her breathing. Children with this condition often stop breathing for a few seconds while they're sleeping, and breathing against obstruction also puts a strain on the young child's heart.

ENT specialists conduct sleep studies in the Hospital's Surgical Ward, to monitor patients' oxygen levels and heart rates during sleep. The study determines the urgency for surgical intervention. Jaydine has been admitted for the sleep study and only then will she be placed on the waiting list for surgery. After six months of treatment at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital, Janie looks forward to the day surgeons can clear her little girl's breathing passages so that for once in her life she can sleep peacefully. With a waiting list that stretches into 2012 they will need to wait a while longer for that day. What Jaydine needs is ...

Saturday Surgeries
Not lifesaving yet immeasurably life changing!

SATURDAY SURGERIES - because childhood should never be put on hold

The Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital in Cape Town, South Africa is well known nationally and internationally for the complex surgical procedures performed on children from all of the surgical specialities.

But the Hospital's expertise comes at a price. Due to its excellent reputation for healing critically ill children there is a huge demand for the Hospital's services resulting in extremely long surgical waiting lists. This often leads to procedures for children with less critical surgical needs being postponed to make place for intricate, lifesaving operations that must take preference due to time constraints and the scarcity of beds.

These long waiting times not only mean that children have to live in discomfort for considerable periods of time, but also can lead to medical complications, with the minor surgical conditions becoming critical cases.

The problem

The ENT and General Paediatric Clinical Cases often take a back seat to more critical procedures, creating a long unmanageable list. A list of hundreds of children waiting for a chance at a normal childhood. Whilst these conditions are not lifesaving they are most certainly life changing for a young child.

In many instances the long waiting times lead to medical complications, with the minor surgical conditions eventually becoming critical cases. Long delays lead to patients missing their surgery dates, wasting booked theatre time and ultimately a prolonged waiting period.

There are currently two **General Paediatric Surgery** procedures that are often postponed.

An orchidopexy operation is performed to relocate the testis from an abnormal position (a congenital anomaly) to a normal position within the scrotum. If not operated on the condition could have fertility and psychological implications

A Hernia operation corrects a small defect in the abdominal wall that needs closing. If not operated on it has the potential to lead to complications as a result of trapped bowel, cutting off the blood supply.

The waiting list for orchidopexy and hernia patients currently extends into March 2012. An 8 month wait for a chance at a normal childhood!

ENT Surgery is another surgical speciality that has a long waiting list for certain minor procedures. Procedures include:

Adenotonsillectomy surgery for abnormal pauses in and low breathing.

Tympanomastoid surgery for a cholesteatoma which is an expanding growth in the middle ear.

Although a 5 month waiting period may not appear to be a long time, for a child who cannot hear properly or struggles with their breathing, it must seem like a lifetime.

A simple solution – *Saturday Surgeries*

The solution is to offer an additional surgery day at the Hospital on Saturdays over a 6 to 10 week period. This '*Saturday Surgeries*' Surgical Waiting List Relief Initiative, 'is planned to run from October – December 2011. This worthy initiative will have an immediate impact on alleviating the extensive waiting lists for life changing procedures at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital. With these particular cases most patients may be discharged the same day as the procedure, which will reduce pressure on the Hospital staff and bed availability.

The initiative would allow for 8 orchidopexies and 5 ENT procedures to be completed over the *Saturday Surgeries* days, totalling 39 clinical cases completed during the 6 week period, alternatively 65 clinical cases completed during a 10 week initiative.

A clear plan of action

Saturday Surgeries will involve:

- Providing an extra day of surgery on Saturdays for 6 to 10 weeks, as surgery is not normally conducted on weekends.
- Beginning with procedures that currently have the longest waiting lists.
- Bringing in additional highly qualified and specialist medical staff to conduct these procedures, when theatres are not used, to shorten the waiting list.
- Careful selection of cases as none of the cases should require an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) bed.
- Utilising the Day Surgery Unit (A7) which is not in use on the weekends. This will ensure that this project will not have any negative impact on other patients requiring beds over the weekend.
- Using only experienced specialists to do the cases ensuring maximum impact on the day for efficient use of the time available.
- Running theatre lists in addition to the current theatre lists with careful planning so as not to inconvenience or overburden the staff in any way.
- Running the initiative each Saturday from October until mid-December 2011.
- Patients being admitted at 07h00 on the day of surgery with most of the patients being discharged the same day post-surgery.
- Allowance being made for staffing to look after 2 to 3 patients to stay overnight in the Day Surgery Unit.

Far-reaching benefits

- Sick children awaiting much-needed life changing operations can undergo these procedures sooner. Delays while waiting for surgery not only decreases their quality of life but can also cause severe damage causing them to become critical cases.
- More patients will be treated which will allow for additional critical procedures to take place during the weekly theatre operating hours.
- Waiting lists will be successfully and efficiently shortened and the Hospital's capacity increased. This supports the ethos of the surgeons to provide the best possible medical and nursing care with the shortest hospitalisation possible.

- Shorter waiting lists mean fewer no-shows and thus fewer rebookings. Long delays such as this lead to many patients missing their dates resulting in both wasted theatre availability as well as the need for rebooking, hence a cycle of prolonging the wait again.
- Once a big volume of these life-changing cases are taken off the waiting list, there will be scope for more flexibility for theatre procedures during the week.

BUDGET

The Children's Hospital Trust needs to raise R196,260.00 for 6 *Saturday Surgeries* days to conduct 39 clinical procedures.

	Cost per day	Surgeries per day	No of days	TOTAL
General Surgery	R 34,710.00	8	3	R 104,130.00
ENT Surgery	R 30,710.00	5	3	R 92,130.00

Alternatively we can run 10 *Saturday Surgeries* days for R327,100.00 to conduct 65 clinical procedures.

	Cost per day	Surgeries per day	No of days	TOTAL
General Surgery	R 34,710.00	8	5	R 173, 550.00
ENT Surgery	R 30,710.00	5	5	R 153, 550.00

Doctors and Project Co-ordinators will be paid directly by the Trust thus avoiding additional agency fees. Costs have been included for staff for the Central Processing Department to enable the instrument sets to be available for these cases. All consumables and the patient's overnight stay will be paid for by the Hospital.

DONOR RECOGNITION

Donors will be given due recognition for their contribution to this project in line with the Trust's progressive donor recognition policy. The Trust has an experienced communications team who will coordinate effective media campaigns on behalf of donors to ensure optimum editorial coverage.

Although editorial coverage is not guaranteed, the Trust has an excellent track record for coordinating successful media campaigns. On average donors who are making sizeable donations to the Trust are receiving R1million plus in editorial coverage; an excellent return on investment. The *Saturday Surgeries* initiative is particularly newsworthy as it will impact positively on the country's health resources and as a result will spark significant media interest and exposure for key donors.

(See attached an overview of editorial coverage secured for Trust donors who contributed towards the building of a Surgical Skills Training Centre at the Hospital).

LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY

The Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital is a public tertiary and secondary level State hospital, funded by the Department of Health of the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC). PGWC currently has an operational budget of approximately R400 million per annum for the maintenance and upkeep of the Hospital.

As a result of *Saturday Surgeries* the Provincial Government of the Western Cape's spend on health will go further as more cases will be cleared. Once the waiting lists are shorter it will be easier to keep them at an acceptable length and for the Hospital to be able to manage the standard procedure requirements.

The intention is to continue *Saturday Surgeries* as an annual or bi-annual project, impacting on other surgical specialities such as spinal injuries, eye and plastic surgeries both at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital and other paediatric service hospitals in the Western Cape.

BANK DETAILS

Local donations

The Children's Hospital Trust
Bank: Standard Bank
Branch: Rondebosch
Account: 07144 3126
Branch code: 025-009

International donations

The Children's Hospital Trust
Bank: Standard Bank
Branch: Rondebosch
Account: 071 433 090
Branch code: 025 009 11
Swift code: SBZAZAJJ
Bank telephone: +27 21 680 4729

Donate online www.childrenshospitaltrust.org.za

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital

The Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital is the only dedicated specialist paediatric hospital serving the children of Southern Africa. It is a national asset and handles the worst cases of disease and chronic illness in children under the age of 12. It is often the last centre of hope for little patients. The Hospital manages approximately 250,000 patient visits each year. The Hospital currently has 290 beds.

The majority of the Hospital's patients are from the Western Cape, with cases from the rest of South Africa, Africa and in rare instances, the rest of the world. The majority of the Hospital's patients are from poor and marginalised communities. One third of the patients treated are under a year old.

Focus areas for the Hospital include renal and liver transplants, specialised burn care, neurosurgery, cancer treatment, intensive care, HIV/AIDS research, TB, re-hydration and co-ordination and management in the care of chronic disorders. The aim of the Hospital is to provide each and every patient with the best medical care, irrespective of parent's income, race, gender, religion or place of residence.

The Children's Hospital Trust

The Children's Hospital Trust was founded in 1994 as the independent Fundraising Arm of the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital when the Hospital was threatened with closure due to lack of funding. Since its inception the Trust has supported the Hospital through upgrading its buildings, purchasing vital equipment and funding critical training and research programmes.

The Children's Hospital Trust's expanded its funding focus in 2011 to include funding paediatric healthcare projects in the Western Cape beyond the Hospital's doors which will have a direct or indirect impact on the services and patient load at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital.

The Trust is funded from an endowment, ensuring that 100% of all donations received are used towards the projects and programmes we fund. Not a cent is used for administration or operational expenses.