



Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital Emergency Centre Upgrade and Expansion

Phase 2 Progress Report: January - June 2021

Introduction to the Emergency Centre

The only specialist paediatric centre in sub-Saharan Africa, the Emergency Centre (EC) at Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital (RCWMCH) is a haven of healing for little ones far and wide. When emergencies arise, families take comfort in knowing that the Hospital operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide high quality, evidence-based medical, surgical, nursing and paramedical services to sick and injured little patients. With a team of caring nurses and doctors and a full spectrum of collaborative paediatric subspecialties, the EC provides immediate healthcare to little ones, as well as support and reassurance to their traumatised families.

Project Overview

The upgrade and expansion of the current Emergency Centre began in April 2019 and was designed in partnership with the clinical team. The project will be delivered in two phases, with phase 1 completed in October 2020 and phase 2 on 31 January 2022. The upgrade and expansion will improve personalised care and flow of patients and healthcare professionals through the extremely busy frontline of the Hospital. All spaces designed with the comfort and safety of young patients in mind. Despite the pressures and inconvenience of construction in progress, EC staff have been committed to maintaining the high standard of care needed to minimise hospitalisation and ensuring that the children return home to their families without delay.



Every little one counts



Changes in the Emergency Centre include:

Phase 1:

EC staff were thrilled to move into their spacious new areas which have wonderful child-friendly artwork and décor. Phase 1 of the EC upgrade and expansion was successfully completed in October 2020. The main areas completed are:

- Two isolation cubicles and an ablution area (completed in February 2020)
- More comfortable waiting areas for families
- Separate triage rooms
- Rehydration area
- Family counselling room
- Calming room
- Child protection room
- The security and greeters' offices

Some of these areas are temporarily being used to support services that will be displaced during phase 2 of construction.

Phase 2:

Phase 2 construction commenced in November 2020. January 2022 will see phase 2 of the project completed, which will include:

- Improved staff and teaching facilities
- Burns treatment room
- Specialised units of care within the Emergency Centre
- Medical and Trauma resuscitation areas closer to each other
- Decontamination and isolation room with separate entrance from the outside
- Lift from Emergency Centre directly to Operating Theatres and ICU
- Fully equipped EC

Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Hospital Services

The leaders at RCWMCH continue to navigate its team strategically, implementing solutions-based decisions, with the aim of creating a safe environment for staff, patients and their families. While dedicated frontline EC staff continue to manage the critical and life-saving care for both patients and their families, maintaining the high standard of care needed to minimise hospitalisation and ensure that the little ones are reunited with their families swiftly. Click to read more here: [COVID-19: Experience of a tertiary children's hospital in Western Cape Province, South Africa](#)



Every little one counts

Building Progress Phase 2

EC Post-Triage Reception

- Hospital management identified this area as an operational priority.
- The requirements of social distancing are a challenge in the waiting areas, where sick and injured little ones and their caregivers wait. The current surge season – a time when children suffer from respiratory illnesses, weakened immune systems and increased burns accidents – places additional pressure on the area.
- Having the waiting area, reception and filing areas built earlier would allow for more waiting areas ensuring patient safety.
- In the interim, the Greeters Room and the Security Office will also be used as waiting areas for a few months. There will be a temporary relocation of the security and porters into the EC foyer.

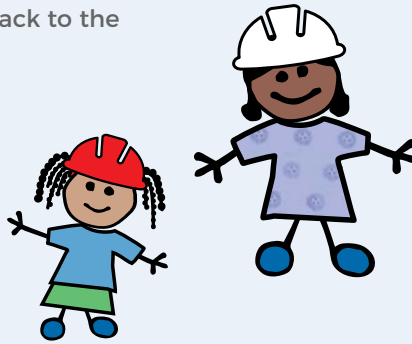


Building Programme: Inclement weather has delayed construction by 8 days. Expected completion dates are:

- o Roof (structure and sheeting) complete: 14 July 2021
- o External facade complete: 30 September 2021
- o Ground Floor finishes complete: 10 November 2021
- o First Floor finishes complete: 13 January 2022
- o External Works & Landscaping complete: 31 January 2022

Equipping the new space

With your help, during Phase 2, we look forward to fully equipping the Emergency Centre with modern, essential, life-saving medical equipment such as oxygen blenders, monitors, incubators, resuscitation trolleys and paediatric bed/trolleys with X-ray facility. Currently, most of the existing equipment dates back to the 70's and 80's or the EC does not have the required equipment and desperately needs it.



Every little one counts

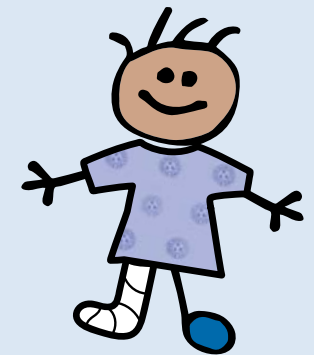
EC Patient Visits

The Hospital is also currently in the midst of the 'paediatric surge season'; the daunting period where several children suffering from burns injuries, gastrointestinal and respiratory illnesses are admitted frequently. These illnesses are largely caused by overcrowding and lack of clean water and sanitation. During the colder months, the hospital sees an increase in acute respiratory infections that affect all age groups but - the most vulnerable are the very young starting from as young as neonatal and the most common age group being under 5 year-olds.

As the only dedicated paediatric EC for the Western Cape, the Hospital sees life-threatening medical and trauma cases. These include children injured in car and taxi accidents, pedestrian accidents, burns and drownings. Violence-related trauma takes the form of beatings, attacks with weapons, sexual abuse and other unimaginable horrors that leave our little ones with long-term, detrimental effects on their health, social and psychological wellbeing. Other injury, poisoning and various consequences of external causes, infectious and parasitic diseases are also some of the illnesses treated. The difference that an optimised Emergency Centre makes for the children of Red Cross Hospital impacts communities, who are often left with very little hope when such devastating trauma occurs.

EC Patient Visits from Jan 2021 - June 2021			
Months	Medical	Trauma	Total
Jan-21	1 958	480	2 438
Feb-21	1 873	487	2 360
Mar-21	2 343	525	2 868
Apr-21	2 514	483	2 997
May-21	2 737	427	3 164
Jun-21	2 908	439	3 347
Totals	14 333	2 841	17 174

Watch the Team share their experiences in the EC during the Covid-19 pandemic



Every little one counts

Hearing what is not being said

From any age, children can experience abuse and research has shown that the perpetrator is usually someone we know.

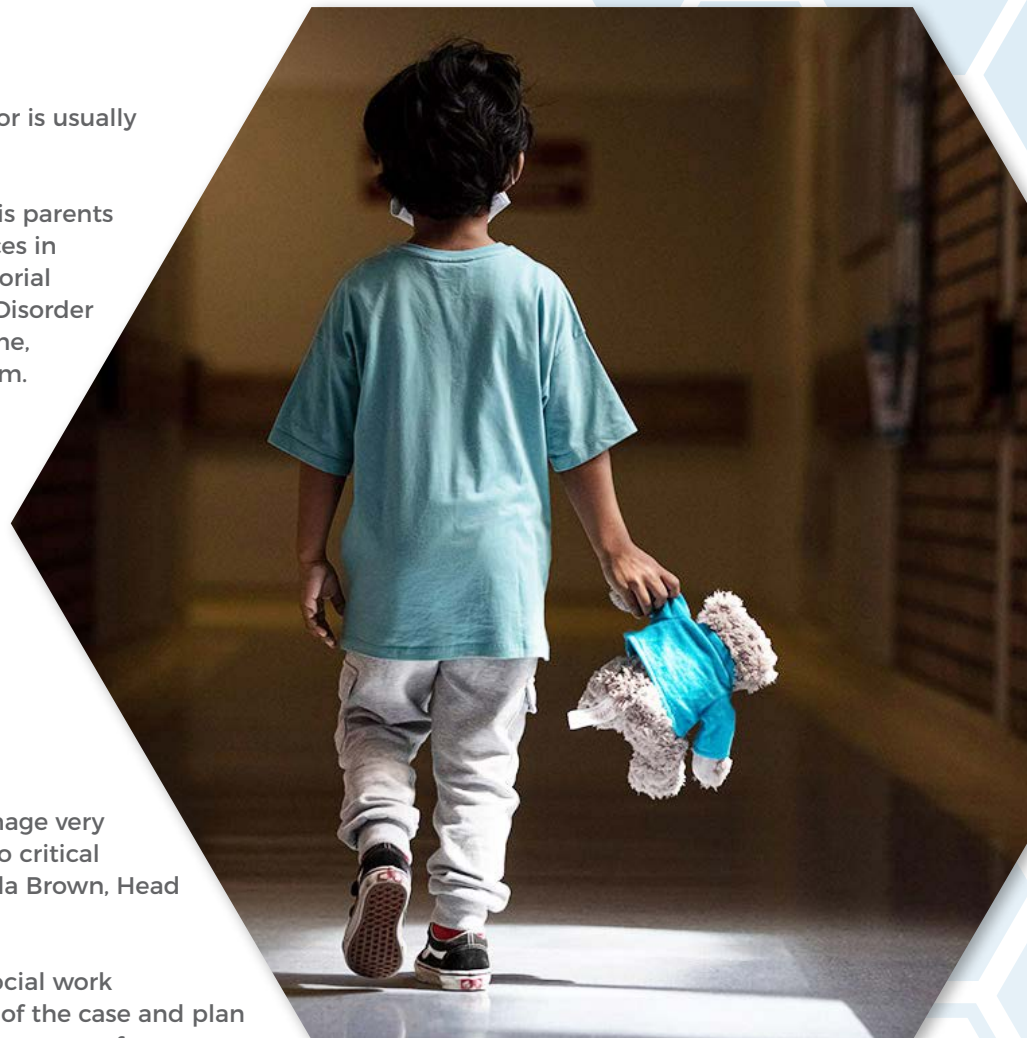
Five-year-old Ethan* has suffered through moments which no child should experience. His parents showed him very little love and affection, and there were no games or learning experiences in his home; only beatings, shouting and neglect. Ethan was treated at Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital (RCWMCH) and presented many symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), including bed wetting, anxiety, and fear. Due to the tumultuous nature of his home, he learnt not to ask for help when he was scared, hungry or needed to go to the bathroom. In response to his bed wetting, he was severely beaten by his biological mother. Ethan's sister, who brought him to the hospital, begged the social workers to not send him back home because of the unsafe environment. Children subjected to abuse often feel fearful or anxious about doing something wrong, and they may become withdrawn trying to shield themselves away from further abuse. His sister's love, strength, commitment, and presence was the healing miracle that Ethan needed.

The social work department worked with Ethan daily to give him the best possible treatment. It took three weeks to gain his trust and he has shown immense strength and courage. Complex cases such as these must always be presented to the police for investigation. Despite Ethan's traumatic experiences he is now learning that it is okay to ask for help and that he can trust adults to be there for him and keep him safe.

"The Social Work Child Protection Service enables the RCWMCH social work team to manage very complex cases because we have benefitted from much training, had time to reflect on, do critical evaluation of our roles, skill sets, as well as plan the best intervention processes," says Carla Brown, Head of Social Work at Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital.

Thanks to the generous donations received from our donors, the training the hospital's social work department received has been invaluable. It has assisted them to do a critical evaluation of the case and plan the best intervention processes which would only benefit Ethan and ensure that he is taken care of.

The Social Work Service and Child Protection Room within the Emergency Centre will continue to help society's most vulnerable, and the Children's Hospital Trust is committed to be champions for children at Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital.



Every little one counts



Conclusion

Chantel Cooper says, "Whenever I get the opportunity to talk to a young patient or a parent, I am reminded of the importance of why we exist as an organisation. A little while ago, I met a young mother from Durban who had put her dreams on hold to make sure that her daughter had access to the best care possible. Her daughter was born with a condition that required regular hospitalisation and ongoing care at home; she was a very sick little girl. Her daughter is now eight years old and comes to the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital when certain medical care is required. What struck me about this mother, was her strength and her ability to focus on what was important for her and her family. She knew that her daughter needed her strength to help her build the resilience to never give up on life, no matter how sick she got. She showed me photos of her daughter proudly going to school, playing with her older brother and doing what children her age should be doing. You could feel the connection between the mother and her daughter; her little girl was one of the happiest patients I have ever met. Even better news is that the mother is now studying and continues to demonstrate to her daughter that you must never give up on your dreams. Being true to who we are and who we serve, provides the foundation of our steadfast commitment and is the moral compass that guides us in reaching our goals. As a team, we are guided by our values of integrity, collaboration, accountability, dynamism and kindness.

Your support has enabled the Trust to upgrade the Emergency Centre that has not only improved patient care, but you have also helped improve staff morale, critical to the care of children and support of families."

The total amount of funds raised so far amounts to R118 159 441.

Thank you for caring as much as you do. Special appreciation goes to our Donors who have supported us in different ways. You make a valuable difference in helping us meet the needs of those we serve. We could not do what we do without you.



Over 17 000 little ones were treated at the EC from January - June 2021

24 hour medical, surgical, nursing and paramedical services

R122 million target to raise for the new Emergency Centre upgrade and expansion

66% of children are under the age of 5

24% of children are under 1

56% male

44% female



Every little one counts



www.childrenshospitaltrust.org.za