

## Adena Regional Medical Center Launches "Telemedicine"

**The project enables specialists in Columbus to view distressed newborns with exceptional clarity, examine detailed x-rays, view lab results and consult with attending physicians in Chillicothe in real-time.**

Wednesday, January 30, 2008

Without ever leaving the nursery, fragile babies born at Chillicothe's Adena Regional Medical Center are receiving clinical assessments from specialists an hour away at Nationwide Children's Hospital, thanks to high-definition videoconferencing capabilities made possible via the Ohio Supercomputer Center.

Called *Telemedicine*,

the project enables specialists in Columbus to view distressed newborns with exceptional clarity, examine detailed x-rays, view lab results and consult with attending physicians in Chillicothe in real-time.

"*Telemedicine*

dramatically increases the care of our youngest patients," said Dr. John Fortney, medical director for Adena Health System. "If we're looking for help with a diagnosis, someone from Children's - whether it's a neonatologist or a sub-specialist, such as a pediatric cardiologist - will see the patient and speak to the attending physician in real time. Currently, information is relayed by telephone, which means it's subject to interpretation," he said. "With high-definition videoconferencing, specialists can make a more thorough evaluation."

Adena Regional Medical Center was selected for the pilot because the hospital sends more pediatric patients to Nationwide Children's than any other outside of the Columbus metropolitan area. In their first year of operation with telemedicine, physicians were able to make quicker and more accurate clinical assessments via videoconferencing, especially regarding the need to transfer these critical care newborns.

"If a baby needs to be moved to our facility, doctors have seen the child, reviewed their diagnostic images and can prepare for the infant's care as soon as he or she arrives," said Dr. Stephen Welty, chief of neonatology, Nationwide Children's Hospital. "Just as importantly, we also use this as a tool to determine if a baby doesn't need to be transferred. Then, the child can stay with family and avoid unnecessary stress."

*Telemedicine*

is a growing trend. Recently, the Federal Communications Commission's Rural Health Care Pilot Program awarded \$417 million to 69 projects around the nation to "significantly increase access to acute, primary and preventative health care in rural America." Four of those projects serve Ohioans by providing high-speed connections to healthcare facilities in nearly half of Ohio's 88 counties.

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