Nemours Team Performs First Two Liver Transplants in Jamaica

Willington, DE (October 5, 2018) - A surgical team from Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children performed the very first liver transplant on the island of Jamaica, at Bustamante Children's Hospital in Kingston on September 25. A few days later they did the second liver transplant. The Nemours medical/surgical team is also in Kingston to help establish the island's first pediatric liver transplant program, and are training Jamaican doctors to eventually perform these surgeries on their own.

“This opens up a lifesaving therapy for children who don’t have access to that. It provides a lower cost alternative for that therapy, and it builds expertise and infrastructure in the country in which we are doing it. So, these are huge benefits,” said Dr. Stephen Dunn, Chair, Surgery Department, Nemours duPont Hospital for Children.

The first liver transplant patient was Zaiden, age 13 months, from Montego Bay whose father was his donor. Zaiden suffers from biliary atresia, a condition in which the bile ducts are blocked, causing liver damage -- a condition that was diagnosed when he was just a few weeks old. Nemours doctors met Zaiden prior to the surgery and worked with Bustamante on his care plan to prepare him for surgery. Doctors reported that the surgery went very well and that both Zaiden and his father are now recovering.

The second liver transplant patient was Kayon, age 16 months, whose donor was her uncle. Kayon was also diagnosed early on but her mother says the most difficult part has been waiting for the resources to become available to have the surgery. She is extremely grateful to the Nemours team, as she would have never been able to afford the trip to the US for this life-saving surgery.

“The surgeries went very well. The families as well as our team, are very happy with the outcome,” said Dr. Dunn. “Essentially, we got the same results we would get in the United States.”

Doctors say biliary atresia is the most common reason babies need a liver transplant. Without surgery, 95 percent of babies for whom the condition has progressed won't live past 18 months due to malnutrition and infection.

Nemours doctors and nurses shared best practices at the patients' bedsides, and the Nemours team will provide post-surgical follow-up on the patients via telehealth

Nemours Children’s Health System

Nemours is an internationally recognized children's health system that owns and operates the Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Del., and Nemours Children's Hospital in Orlando, Fla., along with outpatient facilities in six states, delivering pediatric primary, specialty and urgent care. Nemours also powers the world’s most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, KidsHealth.org and offers on-demand, online video patient visits through Nemours CareConnect. Established as The Nemours Foundation through the legacy and philanthropy of Alfred I. duPont, Nemours provides pediatric clinical care, research, education, advocacy, and prevention programs to families in the communities it serves. For more information, visit https://www.nemours.org.

For further information: Yusila Ramirez 407-650-7676 Media@Nemours.org

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