

Tufts Children's Hospital and Boston Children's Hospital Collaboration

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

Tufts Medical Center will enter into a collaboration with Boston Children's Hospital (BCH) effective July 1, 2022 and pending regulatory approvals. This FAQ answers questions about what the collaboration means for physicians and patients. It will be updated, as more details are known.

ABOUT THE COLLABORATION WITH BOSTON CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Q: What services are transitioning to BCH and when?

A: Effective July 1, 2022 and pending regulatory approvals, Tufts Children's Hospital will close its 41 pediatric inpatient beds and begin a process, also requiring regulatory approval, to convert them to adult beds. This specifically applies to the following care areas:

- Our 26 bed pediatric "med-surg" floor (Floating 7)
- Our 10 bed pediatric intensive care unit (PICU)
- Our 5 bed pediatric bone marrow transplant unit (Pedi BMT)
- Our dedicated pediatric emergency room. After July 2022, we will continue to see pediatric patient in our ED, but will no longer have a dedicated pediatric space
- The majority of our pediatric subspecialty outpatient clinics

Tufts Children's Hospital will refer all pediatric inpatients to Boston Children's after July 1, 2022.

Q: What will happen to the Level III neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)?

A: The Division of Newborn Medicine at Tufts MC remains dedicated to providing outstanding care to newborns. Tufts MC's 40-bed, Level 3 neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) will remain at Tufts Medical Center. Tufts MC's Newborn Transport Services, along with its dedicated physicians and staff, will continue in its current capacity, sustaining access to world-class maternal and newborn care. Tufts MC's neonatologists will continue to provide services at our regional partner hospitals, as those arrangements remain unchanged.

Q: What is the plan for pediatric primary services?

A: Tufts Children's Hospital's pediatric primary services, including its Pediatric and Adolescent Asian Clinic and Center for Children with Special Needs, will remain onsite at Tufts MC. Discussions with BCH have begun about how to best structure the future of our pediatric subspecialty ambulatory clinics (Boston, Brockton, Chelmsford, Lawrence and Woburn) and our outpatient surgical/procedural services and pediatric hospitalist network (Signature Healthcare Brockton, Lawrence General, Lowell General, MelroseWakefield and MetroWest Medical Center). Tufts Children's and BCH are committed to sustaining access to pediatric care for these services and communities and will have more to say soon. In the meantime, Tufts Children's will continue to provide these services to patients and families.

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Q: What is the plan for inpatient pediatric hospitalist care at community hospitals?

A: Tufts MC in collaboration with BCH will maintain and grow its pediatric hospitalist programs at Signature Healthcare Brockton, Lawrence General Hospital, Lowell General Hospital, MelroseWakefield Hospital and MetroWest Medical Center. You are encouraged to continue to refer pediatric admissions to these hospitals.

Q: What is the plan for the pediatric outpatient satellite clinics?

A: Tufts MC's outpatient satellite clinics in Brockton, Chelmsford, Lawrence and Woburn remain open and operational for patients. Current patient appointments will be kept. In collaboration with BCH, we will evaluate pediatric outpatient services to ensure the right care is provided in the right place. Further details about this analysis and plan will be forthcoming. As circumstances necessitate a change, physicians and patients will be contacted directly to ensure continuity in high quality, seamless care.

ABOUT PATIENT CARE AND REFERRALS

Tufts MC will communicate with every patient and family to ensure continuity of care. In the coming months, services will remain as efficient and high quality as they are today. Between now and July 1, 2022, Tufts MC will partner with BCH to orchestrate transitions for physicians, parents, and patients.

Q: Where can patients get specific answers to their questions?

- *By phone:* Tufts MC has established a dedicated resource line to address specific physician and patient questions: **866-978-2339**.
- *Website:* Tufts MC also has designated a section of its website to provide key updates and resources: **www.tuftsmedicalcenter.org/BCH**.

Q: Should I be finding a new [pediatrician/pediatric specialist] for my patients?

A: It is important to understand that this change will not have any immediate impact on patient care. At this time, we encourage parents/patients to keep their current care teams. Tufts MC will be in close communication with physicians/parents in the coming months to facilitate smooth transitions of care where needed. Parents/patients are asked to:

- Continue to make appointments with their Tufts Children's Hospital physician's office as normal
- Keep any appointments scheduled with a Tufts Children's primary care physician or specialist
- Look for further information and news about any necessary changes moving forward

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Q: Will my patient's [pediatrician/pediatric specialist] go to Boston Children's?

A: Further details about where our patients will access pediatric specialty care in the future are still being worked out and we will keep you informed of any changes. In the meantime, we encourage parents/patients to maintain their child's current care team.

Q: What about new referrals for pediatric specialty care?

A: Tufts MC will continue to accept new patient referrals for now. Referring physicians and their patients will be kept closely informed of any changes to ensure that patient access to care remains uninterrupted.

Q: What resources are available to facilitate my patient's subspecialty care at Boston Children's?

A: Boston Children's Hospital has a wealth of resources in place to help referring physicians coordinate the necessary patient care including:

- A dedicated website for physicians (<https://www.childrenshospital.org/clinician-resources>),
- A dedicated referral phone line: 1-844-BCH-PEDS (1-844-224-7337)

ABOUT NETWORK INTEGRATION AND COSTS

Q: Is the BCH collaboration going to result in patients paying more for care?

A: Tufts Children's Hospital has always promised to deliver on high-quality, low-cost care in a very expensive market, and there is no wavering from that commitment. Parents/patients should consult with their health plans and/or human resource benefits administrators for details about their insurance coverage and potential out-of-pocket costs for care.

Q: What impact will the collaboration have on physicians who have focused on keeping pediatric care within the Wellforce system (network integration)?

A: Physicians' efforts to keep care within the Wellforce system is deeply appreciated. Network integration demonstrably improves the quality and efficiency of patient care. Tufts MC will continue to accept new patient referrals while its plans with BCH take further shape.

Q: How will the BCH collaboration impact performance in value-based contracts?

A: The Wellforce system remains committed to addressing affordability and to keeping care close to home. The leadership of the Wellforce Clinically Integrated Network, Tufts MC and BCH are working together to address potential financial impacts of the new collaboration on physicians who are participating in value-based contracts.

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