



# PEDIATRIC EMERGENCY

From One Hospital to Another

*Kimberly Herrera's 19-month-old son Giovanni was having trouble breathing.*

*Shown: Giovanni Herrera, 2, of Raritan is back to being an active toddler, after a flare up with his asthma that landed him in the Emergency Department of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset and The Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital.*



"I could count his ribs every time he took a breath," she said. "He wouldn't stop coughing and he started throwing up."

Mrs. Herrera used a nebulizer to give her son asthma medication in the form of a mist to inhale. But when his breathing still didn't improve, the Raritan Boro family came to the Emergency Department at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJ) Somerset in Somerville.

Giovanni was having an asthma attack. He underwent a chest X-ray and was given IV medication to help his breathing.

"Everyone from the doctors to the X-ray tech and the nurse who inserted the IV were wonderful with my son," Mrs. Herrera said.

The Emergency Department features a 16-room Express Care area, which includes five rooms that are specially equipped for children. Children also have their own waiting area with videos and games.

Giovanni needed to be hospitalized for a few days to stabilize his breathing. He was transferred to The Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital (BMSCH) at RWJ in New Brunswick where he could be cared for by a team of pediatric specialists.

"The transition was very smooth," Mrs. Herrera said. "It was very easy when we arrived at BMSCH. The tech was waiting to get my son's vitals. A doctor was right there."

Among Giovanni's initial care team were physicians at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School including Niel Miele, MD, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Assistant Director of the Pediatric Emergency Department at BMSCH, Alan Weller, MD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, and Natalie Gengel, MD, a pediatric resident.



*Shown: The Emergency Department at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset (RWJ) treats patients of all ages, including children like Giovanni, who was diagnosed with asthma at RWJ Somerset, then transported to The Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick. Both hospitals belong to the RWJ Health System.*

"Asthma is one of the most common health problems we see in children who come to our Emergency Department, especially during the winter months because cold air can often trigger an asthma attack," said Dr. Miele. "We typically give a child three nebulizer treatments and IV medication and then monitor the child's response. If there are not significant improvements in breathing, the child will need to be admitted for further treatment, which may include steroids and other medications."

Giovanni remained in BMSCH's pediatric unit for six days, undergoing nebulizer treatments every few hours and continuous monitoring of his oxygen levels.

Mrs. Herrera, who stayed by her son's side during his hospital stay, said she is thankful to the nurses and staff.

"They made a stressful time a lot easier for me," she says. "They kept asking, 'How are you Mom?' 'Are you OK Mom?' 'Do you need anything Mom?' They were not only treating my son but they were also looking out for me as well."

"We recognize that our patients are not solitary beings – they come with families," said Linda Maldonado, Family-Centered Care Coordinator at BMSCH. "Families are taken away from their day to day normal activities and the hospital experience is completely new to them and can be very stressful and overwhelming."

Part of the hospital's approach to family-centered care includes: family participation in physician rounding and nursing change of shift report at the bedside, the \$5 Meal Voucher program which allows parents to purchase a voucher and have their own meals delivered to the child's room, and special events, such as the "Take a Break" program which invites parents to relax in the family lounge with complimentary bagels or doughnuts and coffee. A Patient and Family Advisory Council meets monthly to offer suggestions on addressing patient and family needs.

In addition to a 24-bed pediatric unit, BMSCH also features an adolescent unit, a hematology/oncology unit, pediatric intensive care unit, neonatal intensive care, pediatric perioperative suites and same day stay services and a pediatric emergency department. Its pediatric specialists are certified in areas such as surgery, urology, cardiology, oncology, hematology and pulmonology.

For the third consecutive year, BMSCH has been named one of the nation's best children's hospitals, according to the 2014-15 *U.S. News & World Report* ranking of America's Best Children's Hospitals. It is one of only 89 children's hospitals out of 183 surveyed nationally ranked in one or more specialties. BMSCH is ranked among the top children's hospitals in Pediatric Urology (#39).

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