



"Parents are usually so busy preparing to meet their new addition that they most often fail to think ahead about their own needs."

> Betsy Laughter, MSW, education specialist, WakeMed Birth & Family Education

Laughter wants new parents and their circle of support to know that's a fairly normal feeling and to be alert to any concerning signs of peripartum (the period of time shortly before, during and after delivery) and postpartum depression, anxiety and mood disorders. "It's not fun to talk about or to think you might personally experience mild or severe depression during such a special time, but the reality is that you don't necessarily have control over some of the changes to your body and mind."

#### **A Sea of Change**

New mothers' bodies have already been through a lot physically, and then they experience a wide array of physical postpartum changes, including big hormonal swings that directly affect their mood and mindset. "When you add in the day-to-day feeding and caretaking of a newborn, it's a lot," said Laughter.

Caring for a baby through those early developmental stages can be absolutely amazing, but just when you get into a new routine your baby's sleep patterns or feeding needs are bound to change. "Even if you're not a first-time parent, the waves of change just keep coming in those early months, and they can really catch you off guard at times," said Laughter. The best thing you can do for yourself and your baby is to be aware of the many changes to come and try to take care of yourself so you can be as strong as possible in body and mind during challenging times.

Below are five tips she offers for expectant parents.

- Build Your Circle of Support. Identify a handful of people who you know you can count on and trust to step in for you to care for your baby or to take over some daily tasks. Talk to these people in advance about the specific ways they will help you in the first days and months. Many times, that doorstep delivery or even virtual support will be more helpful than you realize. Ask yourself who can help you order groceries, take away/bring back laundry, handle outdoor chores, and most important, check in on you. Tell your circle of support that you are counting on them to make you laugh, let you cry, really listen and step in when you might not realize you need help.
- Create Your Own Nest. Pick a place in your home that you will
  retreat to on a regular basis to recharge. It is very important for
  parents to take real breaks and to rest their bodies and minds.
  Whether you need to sleep, eat in peace, read, talk to a friend or

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



## SELF CARE REALITY CHECK

It can be hard to balance the expectations of picture-perfect moments with the reality of the daily struggles for sleepdeprived parents. "Creating and caring for a tiny human who can't communicate with you is a significant task," says Laughter. "It's ok if the other things in life take a back seat for a while. Develop a self-care plan as you prepare for baby's arrival."



just listen to music without interruption, you need to plan in advance to step away, breathe and reset. If you make this a priority from the beginning during pregnancy, you are proactively taking care of yourself, which is a critical step in order to remain strong for the ongoing care of your baby.

Learn from Others. Take the time during pregnancy to sign
up for birth and parent education classes. "At WakeMed, we
go over just about every topic you can think of in our
classes, and you can select from a menu of options to meet
your interests and needs," said Laughter. "Our goal is to
prepare you for the unknown, build your knowledge and
self confidence, and provide you with trusted resources."

• Ask for Help Anytime. If your baby is already here, and you find you don't have a circle of support or aren't taking breaks for yourself, it's not too late. Reach out. People want to help. Do not tell yourself that you have to get through tough times on your own. When you combine stress, isolation, sleep deprivation and ongoing fatigue, it's a bad recipe that can lead to serious problems, including depression. If you aren't able to rely on family and friends for the type of support you need, there are plenty of other resources. Check out the resources listed on the next page or call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) if you and/or your spouse need immediate help.

Join a Support Group.

Sometimes you just need to surround yourself with people who understand what you're navigating because they're going through something similar. There are many different types of support groups to help new parents connect, and some focus on specific needs such as, breastfeeding, exercise, depression or grief. Many have gone virtual recently, which can make it even easier to join in while juggling an ever-changing routine.

"Our goal is to prepare you for the unknown, build your knowledge and self confidence, and provide you with trusted resources."

PRING 2021 FAMILIES FIRST



# RESOURCES FOR NEW PARENTS



## **WakeMed Postpartum Support Group**

Available to moms with babies up to the age of 2. Currently meeting virtually every other week with daytime and evening options. This is for any new mom seeking support and a community. Contact Betsy Laughter, MSW, at blaughter@wakemed.org.

#### UNC Women's Mood Disorder Clinic at WakeMed North Hospital

Elizabeth Cox, MD, sees patients at WakeMed North and has clinical expertise in treating women's mood and anxiety disorders, as well as other psychiatric disorders, during time periods of hormonal fluctuation and change (pregnancy, postpartum, menstruation, menopause and infertility). Call (984) 974-3989 for more information.

## Moms Supporting Moms through SAFEchild

Offers support and mentoring for pregnant and postpartum women and their families. They offer a local support group for moms that is currently meeting virtually. They also offer a Warm Line and a text support line. www.SAFEchildnc.org

#### **Postpartum International**

Support groups and mental health providers who are certified in Maternal Mental Health.

www.postpartum.net

#### **Psychology Today**

You can search on this site for a mental health provider who is the best fit for you.

www.psychologytoday.com

## **Triangle Area Parent Support** (TAPS)

Organizes and facilitates communitybased parent support across the Triangle.

www.tapsnc.org

#### **Stress & Anxiety**

While bringing a new baby home can and should be full of happiness, it can also be a stressful time for new parents. On top of the feeding and diaper changing, there are many anxiety-inducing factors that most parents never anticipate.

If a baby has breastfeeding challenges, weight gain concerns, or other developmental or health issues that need to be monitored closely, it can all be a bit too much at times for new parents. Without the right amount of support and professional help when it's needed, things can really feel like they're spiraling out of control.

"No matter how much a parent loves their newborn, those early days, weeks and months after having a baby are stressful," said Laughter. "For mothers, the changes to their bodies and hormones are more than anyone ever seems to grasp before they're actually experiencing it."

#### **Feeling Blue**

It's not uncommon for women to experience a mild form of depression in the first two to three days after birth that many refer to as the baby blues. A drastic change in hormones can cause women to feel anxious, upset or depressed in those early days; they might also feel angry with family members or even the baby.

The following symptoms might come and go in the first few days after delivery.

- Crying for no apparent reason
- Fears about caring for their baby
- Trouble making decisions
- Not eating or sleeping well

"Approximately 80% of women may experience some symptoms of postpartum blues," said Elizabeth Jarvis, MD, WakeMed Obstetrics & Gynecology. "It is not well understood why baby blues happen, but it is thought that a combination of factors including physical, hormonal and emotional contribute to symptoms."

Postpartum baby blues typically resolve within two weeks after delivery. "If a patient is experiencing ongoing or worsening symptoms beyond those initial two weeks of baby blues, it would be a reason to seek help from a medical professional," said Dr. Jarvis. "The rate of postpartum depression may be as high as affecting one in eight women."

#### **Prolonged Postpartum Depression**

For many women, professional medical help will be needed to respond to postpartum anxiety, mood disorders and depression.

"Postpartum depression might show up as what we traditionally think of as depression such as sadness or isolation behaviors, or it can show up as rage," said Laughter. "At times, it might be something you can't



## quite explain or put your finger on, but a mother will just feel or seem off - she won't seem like herself." If a mother is experiencing any symptoms of depression that aren't easily remedied with human interaction, nutritious food, fresh air or basic self care, then it is time to get professional help. It's important to seek help as soon as possible. A mother with prolonged depression may have troubled connecting with her baby, which can lead to developmental challenges and mental health or behavioral issues throughout the child's lifetime. If it goes untreated, postpartum depression can last for months or years and lead to suicide or infanticide. Call for Help -1-800-273-TALK (8255)

## HISTORY OF DEPRESSION

If a woman has a personal or family history of depression, she is likely more at risk of developing postpartum depression. Expectant mothers are encouraged to talk with their medical team about their personal or family history. Seeking out a good therapist and staying connected during and after pregnancy is also a good idea. Find the right person who can help monitor your needs, provide coping mechanisms, and plan for any concerns. Depression can also be a concern long after a child is born so you shouldn't hesitate to seek help at any time.

## ATTN: FAMILY & FRIENDS

Stay in touch with new parents. Your calls to check-in and assistance with appropriate levels of support will almost always be appreciated and can be life-changing and even life-saving if there are concerns about the physical or emotional wellbeing of a mother, father or child.

#### \$2M Gift to Establish Endowment for WakeMed Children's Hospital

hanks to a generous gift from Larry & Diane Barbour and North State Bank, WakeMed Foundation has established a \$2M endowment for the WakeMed Children's Hospital. The endowment will fund the continued delivery of innovative pediatric programs and services at WakeMed Children's for generations to come.

The donation was made in memory of the Barbours' son, Zachary Carlyle Taylor, who was diagnosed with a cancerous brain tumor at age 5. This gift will honor Zachary's life and legacy by allowing WakeMed to fund the most critical needs of the WakeMed Children's Hospital. Additionally, WakeMed Children's Emergency Department was dedicated in Zachary's honor in December 2020.

"Much like WakeMed, North State Bank was built by and for our community," explains Barbour. "We're honored and humbled to support WakeMed – an incredible health system committed to improving the health and well-being of this community. I hope this gift will raise awareness for WakeMed Children's and that it will inspire others to join us in supporting this worthy cause."

"This endowment is a transformational and powerful gift for WakeMed Children's and for this community," explains Karen Chilton, MD, systemwide associate chief quality officer and chief medical officer, WakeMed Children's. "As a pediatrician, knowing we will have funds available to spend each year on those programs and services that are most pressing for children in our community brings me great comfort and excitement."



#### **Giving to the WakeMed Foundation**

WakeMed Foundation is the philanthropic partner for WakeMed Health & Hospitals, supporting the health system in its mission of improving the health and well-being of our community. For over 50 years, the extraordinary care that WakeMed provides has inspired countless donors to invest in our vision to serve all those that need us. From new facilities,

innovative health programs, and meeting the needs of our patients and staff, philanthropy plays an important role in supporting WakeMed's mission.

To make a gift today or to learn more about our generous monthly sustainers, visit wakemed.org/giving or call 919-350-7656.







# "We're grateful to have expert pediatric surgeons who immediately knew what to do to save Tyler's life and help him recover. Dr. Hoover and his staff are extraordinary and no doubt saved my son's life. We are forever thankful!!"

#### Carrie McLamb

Two years year ago, Tyler McLamb was a typical 3-year-old boy – running around and getting into everything. He spent his days doing what most toddlers do – playing and putting just about anything they can find in their mouths.

In March 2019, Tyler started not feeling well with what seemingly appeared to be a virus. He had a sore throat, loss of energy and didn't want to eat or drink much. His parents, Carrie and Joshua McLamb took him to a local urgent care where doctors didn't find anything wrong, and Tyler was sent home. Unfortunately, Tyler's symptoms didn't improve after a few days. His mom started to get really concerned so they went back to urgent care for a follow-up visit. This time, the doctors did an x-ray that revealed Tyler had swallowed a small watch battery, and they sent him immediately to WakeMed Children's Emergency Department.

Upon arrival, Tyler was evaluated in the Children's Emergency Department and then taken to surgery to have the battery removed. He was then admitted to the pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) for recovery, but the next morning, Tyler's condition began a rapid decline. Surgeons found that the battery had eroded Tyler's esophagus and into his trachea, which was making it hard for him get enough air into his lungs. He was put on a breathing tube and sent off to surgery – a major procedure that took nearly 10 hours and required a team of highly-specialized adult and pediatric surgeons.

Thankfully, he was stable after the surgery, but this was just the beginning of Tyler's journey to recovery. From there, Tyler and his family remained at the WakeMed Children's Hospital for nearly four months during which time he endured nearly a dozen procedures and months of treatment and rehabilitation. He stayed on a feeding tube for approximately six months, which left him needing help learning how to swallow and eat again. By fall 2019, Tyler's feeding tube was finally removed and he made a full recovery.

#### **Tyler's WakeMed Family**

Throughout Tyler's stay and treatment, the nurses and doctors became like the McLamb's second family. "We feel so fortunate to have had such incredible surgeons and nurses by our side every step of the way," said Carrie McLamb. "We cannot give enough thanks to the many doctors, nurses, child life and staff in the PICU and main floor for the love and care they have provided for Tyler each and every time we have been there.

Today – two years later, Tyler is a healthy 5-year-old boy. His mom says he's back to his usual, playful self. He loves running outside, Paw Patrol, and is gearing up for kindergarten in the fall of 2021.





The McLamb family want to bring awareness to the dangers associated with swallowing batteries – a danger they were unaware of before Tyler's incident.

"Unfortunately, Tyler isn't the first child we've seen with life-threatening injuries due to ingesting a battery – we probably see a few cases of battery ingestion every month," explains David Hoover, MD, (left) pediatric surgeon with WakeMed Children's – Pediatric Surgery. "Young children love to put everything in their mouths, and batteries are the most dangerous of all

foreign objects we see kids swallow. They're shiny, just the right size and because of the current in the battery, they can cause a chemical reaction between the esophagus lining and the battery's remaining current. This reaction leads to a burn that can erode the esophagus and lead to serious, life-threatening problems if not treated immediately."



#### Little Batteries, Big Danger

Inside small electronic devices may be very powerful, coin-sized button batteries. When swallowed, these batteries can get stuck in the throat and cause severe burns or death.

#### The Hard Facts from Safe Kids Worldwide

Each year in the United States, more than 2,800 kids are treated in emergency rooms after swallowing button batteries. That's one child every three hours. The number of serious injuries or deaths as a result of button batteries has increased ninefold in the last decade.

#### **Top Tips**

- Keep coin lithium battery-controlled devices out of sight and reach of children. Below is a list of some devices that likely include dangerous button batteries: remote controls, calculators, digital scales, key fobs, flashing jewelry & decorations, watches, hearing aids, thermometers, singing greeting cards, toys, tea/t-lights candles (battery-operated)
- Keep devices with button batteries out of reach if the battery compartments aren't completely secure, and lock away loose batteries.
- If you suspect a child has swallowed a button battery, go to the emergency room right away.
   Do not let the child eat or drink before seeing a medical professional, and do not induce vomiting.
- Share this life-saving information with caregivers, friends, family members and sitters. It only takes a minute and it could save a life.
- Enter the National Battery Ingestion Hotline (800-498-8666) into your phone right now. Call anytime for additional information.

Learn more at safekids.org/tip/battery-safety-tips.

## SKIN CARE Whether your child has a mysterious rash or is battling eczema, it's helpful to have a pediatric dermatologist as part of your medical team because they are uniquely trained to diagnose and treat children's skin. "Childhood is full of ongoing physical and emotional changes, and a child's skin changes a lot over the years," said Craig Burkhart, MD, Burkhart Pediatric & Adolescent Dermatology. Education is a big part of skin care. Dr. Burkhart recommends starting the conversation with children while they're young using fun facts and tips that kids can grab onto and carry forward to develop lifelong healthy habits. "If we teach children about how cool and important their skin is, they're much more likely to be curious, aware and engaged in proper care," said Dr. Burkhart. We asked Dr. Burkhart to share some helpful insight and tips for parents and kids. Follow along for the skinny on common concerns and irritating skin issues! A PUBLICATION OF WAKEMED CHILDREN'S

### **SKIN CARE**

## Eczema Explained

Children with eczema (commonly referred to as atopic dermatitis) often struggle with repeated, annoying skin flare-ups. The most common symptom is a rash on arms or legs. Eczema is an inflammatory condition that is caused by an immune system reaction, which can be commonly triggered by allergens.

Typically eczema begins in childhood, and one or more parent has likely experienced similar irritations at some point because it is often inherited. However, the different triggers are not always understood so the cause might be a bit of a mystery without expert guidance.

"Childhood is full of ongoing changes, and a child's skin goes through a lot of change over the years." - Dr. Craig Burkhart, Burkhart Pediatric & Adolescent Dermatology



A pediatric dermatologist can help provide some relief and management tips for children while working with a family to narrow in on likely triggers for a child's flare-ups.

"It's important for families to work with their doctor to determine the root cause of skin irritations so they can avoid it or eliminate the use of triggers and ease any suffering caused by eczema," said Dr. Burhkhart. "It's not uncommon for more than one thing to be part of the problem."

#### **Troubleshooting**

When a child has an eczema flare-up, it is helpful for parents to try to track any possible irritants, including food, over the past few hours or even over the past day. "A rash, dryness or other skin reaction could be caused by irritants, allergens, weather, or a combination of things," said Dr. Burkhart.

Working with your child's pediatrician and a dermatologist can help you identify the causes. Keep in mind that removing a trigger can help control eczema, but it doesn't cure it.

fun fact skin helps regulate body temperature.



#### **Seasonal Flare-Ups**

Seasonal changes in temperatures from hot to cold or vice versa can cause eczema to flare-up. "The dry air of winter and increased exposure to indoor dust can be troublesome for many people," said Dr. Burkhart. "Regularly applying a moisturizer to your skin is extra important in the winter when it tends to be drier."

Throughout the year, each season can bring a new concern and logical prevention step for skincare. Wind, sun and extreme hot and cold temperatures are all reasons to take extra precautions with protective layers. Whether it's sunscreen, hats or gloves, parents can help prevent concerning skin conditions for kids by taking a few minutes to layer on whatever is most seasonally appropriate.

#### **Picking Products**

Parents can start troubleshooting skin flare-ups by avoiding the use of products with any of the following top allergens for children. When selecting baby products, the list below is a good reference for parents who have battled eczema and want to proactively prevent potential baby skin irritation.

- Fragrances
- Betaines
- Propylene Glycol
- MCI/MI\*
- Formaldehyde
- Lanolin
- Neomycin

fun fact many germs are kept out of the body by your skin.

\*Methylchloroisothiazolinone and methylisothiazolinone

"Many sensitive skin products are priced much higher so parents wonder if it is necessary to use them for all children," said Dr. Burkhart. "If your child doesn't have eczema or the eczema is mild and easily controlled by other changes, you might not need to worry about picking special products." However, he does advise anyone with severe eczema, sudden flare-ups or ongoing concerns to shop wisely and proactively avoid top allergens. Otherwise, you might find yourself regretfully tossing out half-used soaps, shampoos, moisturizers and more when you realize they're a problem for your family.

#### DRY, ITCHY, CRACKED SKIN

Washing and disinfecting your hands is a top recommendation for preventing the spread of germs, but all that scrubbing and soap can disrupt the top, protective layer of skin. Frequent hand washing with harsh products can lead to dry, irritated skin, inflammation and dermatitis, which is a reaction due to exposure to certain substances.

Dr. Burkhart says it's common to see young patients with very dry, irritated skin or frequent eczema flare-ups that cause a lot of concern for both children and parents. "If a child has eczema, the risk and frequency of dermatitis increases," said Dr. Burkhart.

Irritant contact dermatitis can be a big problem for adults or children whose hands are frequently wet. Repeated exposure to substances such as soaps, detergents, alcohol, and irritating chemicals can trigger a response and result in red, scaly skin and more severe concerns such as blisters and splitting.



## fun fact skin protects the body

#### **Dry Skin Dilemmas**

Battling dry skin can be super frustrating, but the solution might be simple. Make sure your children learn to wash, rinse, dry and moisturize. Dr. Burkhart says you can easily resolve many dry skin concerns by washing with milder soaps, rinsing thoroughly, and completely drying the skin. He encourages families to keep a fragrance-free hand moisturizer nearby and to use it after hand washing or bathing and before bedtime. Here's some additional tips:

- Avoid hot water! Lukewarm is best.
- A bath or shower is not necessary every day for children. Aim for 3 to 4 times a week.
- Wash off chlorine from pools or saltwater to prevent dry skin.
- Teach children to gently wash with a cloth or sponge; avoid harsh scrubbing.
- Moisturize. Dry skin is a common concern for young children.
- Stay hydrated. Make sure kids take activity breaks and drink water throughout the day.

#### WHAT'S CAUSING THAT RASH?

Parents naturally worry when they spot a rash on their child. While some rashes will come and go quickly, others can persist and become both pesky and perplexing. Dr. Burkhart explains that irritants and allergens cause rashes

**Irritants** – direct skin contact causes irritation and inflammation.

Allergens – cause the body's immune system to have a reaction.

Examples of these include soaps\*, cleansers\*, air fresheners, creams, dyes and coloring, elastic in socks, foods, fabric softeners, fragrances, medications, metals, poison ivy, oak or sumac, pollen & mold, rubber applicators

**WARNING!** Seek immediate medical attention if your child has a rash and any other signs of concern, including the following symptoms:

FEVER, PAIN, REFUSING TO EAT, SWELLING OR TINGLING OF MOUTH, TONGUE OR THROAT, TROUBLE BREATHING, TROUBLE SWALLOWING, VOMITING, EYE SORENESS

\* Industrial, long-lasting soaps and extra bubbly products are more likely to irritate the skin. Choose gentler formulas to use whenever possible.

fun fact the nerves in skin help with feeling things that you touch.

#### **Slime Alert!**

Dr. Burkhart warns parents that homemade slimes are typically full of allergens and are frequently a cause of bad hand reactions.

#### **Essential Oils**

Exercise caution when using essential oils and do not apply them directly to a rash. While essential oils are quite popular and can be really helpful for some things, proper use is important because they can be highly irritating to the skin.

#### **BUBBLE BURSTING FACTS**

While most kids love the joy of a bubble bath and fun with foaming soaps, the harsh reality is that sometimes too much of a fun thing can lead to irritating skin problems. Bubble bath products typically contain surfactants, which lower the surface tension in water and create foam. Additionally, many bubble bath products contain fragrances. Unfortunately, surfactants and fragrances can lead to or aggravate contact dermatitis, dry skin and eczema.

There are plenty of other ways to add an extra splash of fun to bathtime. A few waterproof toys and a child's imagination can go a long way. Washable finger paint can add a creative twist but Dr. Burhkart cautions parents not to overdo it since they do contain soap. "For a bathtime party without skin-irritating products, add in some glowing bath buddies or an underwater disco light and turn up the music," says Dr. Burkhart. "For the brave parent who doesn't mind mopping up a little water, a submarine spray station or other interactive toys can add an extra dose of play at the end of the day."

fun fact skin helps keep other organs and muscles on the inside of the body.

#### **Meet the Expert – Dr. Burkhart**



Craig Burkhart, MD, MS, MPH, is one of eight board-certified pediatric dermatologists in North Carolina dedicated to the care of children and teens. Prior to opening Burkhart Pediatric & Adolescent Dermatology, PLLC, in Cary, he provided pediatric dermatologic care for infants, children, and teens for 11 years as a professor at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine. Every aspect of his practice is designed so that young people feel welcomed and valued. Dr. Burkhart sees children of all ages and is a local expert on everything from vascular lesions and birthmarks to eczema and acne. He treats conditions requiring excisions or laser surgeries in his practice and at WakeMed Cary Hospital.





#### WakeMed Children's Welcomes Pediatric Urologist Tim Bukowski, MD

Dr. Tim Bukowski will officially join the WakeMed Children's team in April as our first, full-time pediatric urologist. Well-known in the community for his experience and expertise, Dr. Bukowski provides a full range of pediatric urology care, including advanced laparoscopic procedures. More to come from Dr. Bukowski in our next issue of Families First!

#### **How You Can Help**

Ongoing support for the growing health care needs of the patients at WakeMed Children's is made possible through the generous donations of readers like you to the WakeMed Foundation.

To learn how you can support the expansion of WakeMed Children's services, please visit the WakeMed Foundation at www.wakemedfoundation.org or call 919-350-7656.



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## Facility Updates

## WakeMed Children's – Pediatric Pulmonology

Now Open in Clayton 104 Medspring Drive, Suite 200

Providing evaluation and treatment of respiratory problems in infants, children, and adolescents, including a comprehensive Pediatric Sleep Medicine program. All sleep studies are conducted at our dedicated Sleep Center on Ashville Avenue, Cary.

To learn more about WakeMed Children's services and specialty practices throughout the community visit www.wakemed.org/childrens.

## WakeMed Children's PM Pediatrics Urgent Care

Coming this Spring to North Raleigh

8841 Six Forks Road, Raleigh

Dedicated pediatric urgent care, every day from noon to midnight, offering a full spectrum of acute pediatric care for newborns through age 26. Additional locations are currently open in Cary and Morrisville.

Visit wakemed.org/ childrens-urgent-care to learn more.

WakeMed (\*)
Children's



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1260 N. Arendell Avenue Wake Forest location currently seeing patients. Visit mycare 365.org to learn more.

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#### **Advisory Panel for Families First**

Jerry Bernstein, MD, Raleigh Pediatric Associates, PA Karen Chilton, MD, Chief Medical Officer, WakeMed Children's

Bridget Donell, MD, Medical Director, WakeMed Physician Practices – Pediatric Critical Care and Hospital Medicine Amy Griffin, MD, Wake Emergency Physicians, PA Andy Jakubowicz, MD, Wake Emergency Physicians, PA Bill Lagarde, MD, Executive Medical Director, WakeMed Children's Services Debra Laughery, Vice President, WakeMed Marketing & Communications

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