

Hospital for Special Care Receives Grant to Support Garden of Hope Child Development Program

J. Walton Bissell Foundation gives \$10K to HSC in support of Pediatric Unit

NEW BRITAIN, Conn. (May 7, 2013) – [Hospital for Special Care](#) (HSC) announced that it has received a \$10,000 grant from the J. Walton Bissell Foundation, Inc. to assist with funding its Garden of Hope Child Development Program, which is a part of HSC’s Complex Pediatric Care specialty program.

The grant from the J. Walton Bissell Foundation will support further funding for iPads with a “[Proloquo2Go](#)” application that is a full-featured augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) solution for patients that have difficulty speaking. Proloquo2Go can be adapted to suit the needs of a wide range of users with varying literacy levels, and by featuring natural-sounding voices, speech can be generated by tapping buttons with symbols or using the on-screen keyboard with word prediction. Adaptive accessories are also necessary for pediatric patients who either have low or no muscle control.

“HSC is extremely grateful for the support the Bissell Foundation has offered to our pediatric program,” said [Lynn Ricci](#), senior vice president, chief operating officer, Hospital for Special Care. “The goal of the Garden of Hope Child Development Program is to ensure that medically-complex patients in our pediatric unit are offered developmentally appropriate and enjoyable play experiences. With the help of the Bissell Foundation, infants, toddlers and preschool patients will benefit greatly from this funding for important AAC technologies found on an iPad.”

Since the Garden of Hope program at HSC began, patients have learned concepts including matching, counting on fingers, signing colors and basic signs, as well as identifying shapes, numbers, and pictures. They are now able to be a part of group activities due to the progress they have made, and pediatric patients who are unable to speak can use vocal output switches and picture communication systems to participate. Prior to these advances like the iPad and Proloquo2Go application, these patients were not as social with their peers.

“Children in our pediatric unit often have severe to complex health problems and are with us for extended periods of time. Our team works diligently to bridge the gap between acute care and the home while meeting every child’s social and developmental needs,” said John Pelegano, M.D., Chief of Pediatrics, HSC. “Technologies like iPads are beneficial to many of these children because they have a larger visual interface, which is ideal for patients who have difficulties using a traditional keyboard and mouse.”

iPads use high-resolution, multi-touch screens which are ideal for pediatric patients. HSC therapists will teach patients to use adaptive styluses to access a variety of augmentative communication and learning applications. In addition, the mounts for iPads can easily attach to a wheelchair or tabletops and provide independence that HSC patients often strive for. A variety of applications will be downloaded including musical applications, stories, toddler games, educational games, and occupational speech programs.

For more information on HSC's Complex Pediatric Care program, please visit www.hfsc.org.

About Hospital for Special Care

Hospital for Special Care (HSC) is one of the five largest, free-standing long-term acute care hospitals in the United States and the nation's only long-term acute-care hospital serving adults and children. HSC is recognized for advanced care and rehabilitation in pulmonary care, acquired brain injury, medically-complex pediatrics, neuromuscular disorders (including ALS research), spinal cord injury, comprehensive heart failure as well as diagnostic, assessment and consulting services for children and adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Located in New Britain and Hartford, CT, HSC operates inpatient and outpatient facilities serving Southern New England on a not-for-profit basis. For the latest news and information, please visit www.hfsc.org, and follow us on Twitter [@HospSpecialCare](https://twitter.com/HospSpecialCare).

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