

# CoxHealth and St. Louis Children's Hospital to Expand Pediatric Care Across Southwest Missouri

SPRINGFIELD AND ST. LOUIS, MO,  
UNITED STATES, June 12, 2025

/EINPresswire.com/ -- Increased access to highly specialized pediatric care just moved one step closer to becoming a reality today as CoxHealth and St. Louis Children's Hospital – one of the nation's premier pediatric hospitals – announced they have finalized an agreement to expand pediatric care in southwest Missouri. The agreement follows a letter of intent signed in May 2024 by both organizations.

CoxHealth and St. Louis Children's Hospital – with the support and expertise of pediatric specialists at Washington University School of Medicine – will work collaboratively to

bring more advanced care to children and families in Springfield, Mo., and the surrounding region, reducing the need for families to travel long distances for specialty care. Initial efforts focus on significantly expanding pediatric inpatient care by creating a new pediatric hospital within the walls of CoxHealth, which will allow for close collaboration with WashU Medicine clinicians and St. Louis Children's Hospital caregivers and the construction of a comprehensive outpatient center that will include ambulatory surgery, pediatric specialty care clinics, imaging, laboratory services, and infusion. Together, these enhancements will increase local access to more highly specialized medical and surgical care.

"St. Louis Children's Hospital and WashU Medicine are national leaders in pediatric care," said Max Buetow, CoxHealth President and CEO. "We are excited to work together to expand access to pediatric specialty care for hundreds of thousands of children who live in this region. It is equally gratifying that our collective vision aligns with our community's desire for us to deliver care locally and make Springfield a medical hub in this region."



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Recognized as one of the nation's top children's hospitals, St. Louis Children's Hospital is staffed exclusively by WashU Medicine pediatric specialists and is part of BJC Health System (BJC), one of the country's largest not-for-profit health systems, headquartered in St. Louis, Mo.

"There is a tremendous need for high-quality specialized pediatric care in this region," said Rich Liekweg, BJC Health System CEO. "Improving access for patients in need is a fundamental part of BJC's mission. We are proud to partner with CoxHealth as we work together to expand and transform pediatric medicine for families in Springfield and beyond."

By working together, St. Louis Children's Hospital and CoxHealth will advance pediatric care in southwest Missouri through the following key initiatives:

**Improved access:** A standalone, dedicated pediatric outpatient center with ambulatory surgery and specialty pediatric clinics will allow families to stay close to home and reduce the need to travel long distances to seek care. The center will be located at 851 E. Primrose Street near Cox South Hospital. Construction planning is underway, with an anticipated opening in 2027.

**Advanced care:** Our region's pediatric specialty and NICU inpatient care will be enhanced through closer collaboration with WashU Medicine clinicians and St. Louis Children's Hospital.

**Specialty providers:** WashU Medicine will recruit and retain pediatric specialists to serve children in southwest Missouri.



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“WashU Medicine has leveraged its national and international prestige to train and recruit outstanding pediatric specialists who understand the unique health challenges of children, and this has led to improved access for families within the St. Louis region,” said Gary Silverman, MD, PhD, head of WashU Medicine’s Department of Pediatrics and pediatrician-in-chief at St. Louis Children’s Hospital. “With this initiative, we will be able to expand that model, with world-class expertise, to provide that access locally to the families of the southwest Missouri region, ensuring that every child receives the individualized care they deserve.”

Last fall, CoxHealth leaders sought input from parents, community members, local clinicians and civic leaders through meetings and public listening sessions to better understand the needs and challenges of families seeking specialty pediatric care. A clear consensus emerged: the region needs and deserves comprehensive pediatric care. CoxHealth and St. Louis Children’s have come together to ensure that specialized pediatric care is available to children and families across the region.

“Today is an exciting day for children and families across southwest Missouri,” said Trish Lollo, St. Louis Children’s Hospital President. “The collaboration among St. Louis Children’s Hospital, CoxHealth, and WashU Medicine will profoundly impact pediatric care in this region and improve the health and lives of families in this community for years to come.”

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