

Caring for Our Future

Nursing at The Children's Hospital

Spring 2008

Practice

The Golden Anniversary of the Child Protection Team: 50 years and going strong!

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The first multidisciplinary Child Protection Teams in the United States were formed in 1958. 2008 marks 50 years of progress in the recognition and response to child maltreatment, and April marks Child Abuse Awareness month.

In April, we will celebrate the accomplishment of providing 50 years of care, reflect on the history of child maltreatment, anticipate the fact that we will provide care for many more children, and consider further prevention models for our communities.

In 1958, three child protection teams were formed simultaneously across the country. They were the Child Protection Team formed by

C. Henry Kempe, MD, at the University of Colorado Hospital and two sister teams, one at Pittsburgh Children's Hospital and the other at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles. The core of Colorado's first Child Protection Team was made up of one pediatrician, one psychiatrist and one social worker. This original core group created the foundation for the national model for a

multidisciplinary child protection team. This multidisciplinary team approach has endured because the teams have proven to be very practical and they are a relatively inexpensive approach to managing new cases of child physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

Today there are more than 1,000 child protection teams across the country, and more worldwide. Some, like ours, are hospital based and many others are community based.

Following the advent of the child protection teams, providers began to recognize the constellation of injuries associated with child abuse. In 1962, C. Henry Kempe, MD and colleagues published the landmark paper *The Battered Child Syndrome* in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. This seminal paper catalyzed further research and an immediate policy innovation: In 1963 the first child abuse reporting laws were passed. Colorado, New Jersey and California were the first states to

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