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Innovation By Design: New Innovation Design Lab Officially Opens Its Doors

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Innovation by design

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New Innovation Design Lab officially opens its doors

When Children's Mercy first rolled out its 2012 Strategic Plan, one of the key components to accomplishing its 2022 Vision was innovation. To help, a separate innovation strategy was identified.

Since that time, significant effort has gone into implementing the strategy, which led to the creation of the new Center for Pediatric Innovation at Children's Mercy and the recently completed Innovation Design Lab.

And to help celebrate the Innovation Design Lab's official launch, employees are invited to a special Open House tomorrow (Friday, Oct. 16) from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the lab, which is located at 2400 Pershing at Crown Center (first shuttle stop).

"The Center for Innovation is more than a new place – it's a new attitude," said David Westbrook, Senior VP of Strategy and Innovation, who led the 22-member Strategy Task Force that guided the Innovation Center's creation. "The art of innovation is not about the metaphorical painting on the canvas; it's about where you place the frame. The ideation sessions that will take place at the Innovation Design Lab will frame the issues so we can pursue opportunities and trump challenges we might not otherwise see."



Carrie Striker (left), Director of the Pediatric and Congenital Cardiovascular Perfusion Fellowship, discusses a potential patient-benefiting idea with Krista Nelson, Director of Innovation Development, at the new Innovation Design Lab. The bright, colorful new space reflects the approach to inspire, empower and advance innovation by design – available for every stakeholder at every level of the organization.

“We are one of only a few children’s hospitals that have invested in the development of an innovation strategy, although several hospitals are currently exploring the idea, and have reached out to us to learn about what we are doing to advance our own strategy,” said Dawn Wolff, Senior Director of Strategy and Initiative Development. “We are also unique in that our leadership has provided CM employees, patients and families a dedicated space where everyone is empowered to think differently and to collaboratively exchange ideas to solve old challenges and new.

“With several market disruptors now challenging us for pediatric patients, it is critical for us to have innovation capabilities that keep us ahead of the curve by challenging us to be flexible in our thinking and more nimble in our response to our customers’ needs.”

Krista Nelson, Director of Innovation Development, said, "Innovation is everybody's role. Every single one of us has the power to generate and advance creative solutions that will benefit the hospital and the kids and families we serve."

The Innovation Strategy Task Force recognized the need for a process that would support innovators and advance new initiatives. Under Krista's leadership, the Center for Pediatric Innovation will help Children's Mercy thrive in a fast-changing health-care environment by strengthening a culture that encourages everyone to be nimble, agile and engaged in innovation.

And it's already having a positive impact. Carrie Striker, DHEd, MPS, CCP, FPP, Director of the Pediatric and Congenital Cardiovascular Perfusion Fellowship, currently is partnering with the Center to discuss a new idea and its potential benefits to our patients and hospital, as well as any marketplace possibilities.

"The Center functions like a clearinghouse," Carrie said. "It's allowed me to take my idea and move it forward with purpose. It's great to have a creative solution or idea, but if you don't know where to go or what to do next, you can end up wasting valuable time or working in a silo. What makes the Center such a great partner is that it provides a roadmap for where to begin, how to have the most impact and what steps to take next."

How it works

The Innovation Design Lab primarily will focus on bringing new, transformational ideas to market. What it **won't** focus on are those ideas that are more operational in nature, the scheduling of a team meeting or the planning of a retreat. The space is designed for small group, hands-on sessions with predefined objectives and expected deliverables. The space also is not just for employees.

"We look forward to hosting ideation sessions with patients and families to better understand some of their pain points with their health-care experience and identify innovative solutions to resolve them" Dawn said. "We are grateful to Susan Cain, Director of Facility Planning, for helping us design a beautiful space that promotes innovative thinking."

To help, a new [Center for Pediatric Innovation page](#) is now available on the *Scope* so that employees can get additional info on the process and criteria for submitting an innovation idea, request an appointment at the lab, find innovation training opportunities and submit their idea(s) online.

Krista encourages employees to reach out to her by [email](#) or phone (ext. 70101) if they have any questions.

"The Innovation Design Lab is here not just to help spark breakthrough thinking, but to also be the go-to place for innovation educational sessions, collaborative ideation sessions and support that will help bring your ideas to life," she said. "I hope to meet many of you at the Open House."