

## Mobile Care Center Brings Heart Care to Underserved Areas

In November 2019, Cincinnati Children's launched its Mobile Care Center — a family-centered initiative that increases access to quality care in southeastern Ohio. Conceived by the Heart Institute, the Mobile Care Center was first implemented to provide regional cardiology clinics. Since then, the scope of Heart Institute and Cincinnati Children's services provided on the unit continues to expand.

Similar to a mobile blood donation or mammogram vehicle, the Cincinnati Children's Mobile Care Center travels within two hours of Greater Cincinnati to locations where access to specialty care can be a challenge.

“The Mobile Care Center gets care out to underserved areas where some people don't have the resources to get all the way into the city,” says Christopher Statile, MD, pediatric cardiologist and medical director of Heart Institute Outpatient Services. “We're using it for patients who need follow-up or non-emergent cardiac care, and the response has been very positive. Families love that we are right in their backyard.”

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### Featuring the Latest in Technology

The Mobile Care Center is a state-of-the-art unit with two exam rooms, an echo machine and EKG. The care team on board can perform routine tests needed right on-site. With full high-speed Internet, they have direct access to the same medical records and electronic software systems as at the main hospital campus.

Initially launched with one pediatric heart clinic per month in southeastern Ohio, service has expanded to include a second location and an added adult congenital heart disease (ACHD) clinic. The unit is also being used to reach urban underserved areas with clinics held by the Division of General and Community Pediatrics and the Center for Better Health and Nutrition.

### Reacting to the Demands of the Community

The mobility of the unit means location of care can be fluid. “If we find more care is needed in a certain area, we can increase the clinics for that location, or expand to other areas as needed,” Statile says. This versatility proved valuable when the coronavirus (COVID-19) hit. When clinics were halted because of the pandemic, the medical center used the unit as a COVID-19 testing site.

Statile says the driving force behind the Mobile Care Center is to take the next step in family centered care and deliver that care where it is needed. He says, “If we have a clinic closer to patients, the loss to follow-up rate is lower. We hope by bringing the care to the patient, we can help lessen the strain on families who previously had to block off full days to seek specialty care.”

