

Merrill named Chair, Peri, Hemmelgarn and Keifer join Board of Directors for International Children's Hospitals' Patient Safety Collaborative

December 20, 2023 – The international children's hospital patient and employee safety network, [Children's Hospitals' Solutions for Patient Safety \(SPS\)](#), has named Rick Merrill, president and CEO of Cook Children's Health Care System, as its newest board chair. The network also announced that Gil Peri, president and CEO of Riley Children's Health; Carole Hemmelgarn, director for the Executive Master's Program for Clinical Quality, Safety and Leadership at Georgetown University; and Marissa Kiefer, senior vice president and CEO of Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital have joined its board of directors for terms beginning January 1, 2024.

Merrill will assume the role of chair previously held by Marcy Doderer, president and CEO of Arkansas Children's. Peri, Hemmelgarn and Kiefer will assume the board seats previously held by Beth Daley Ullem, president, Quality and Safety First; Katy Welkie, CEO of Primary Children's Hospital; and Madeline Bell, president and CEO of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

"SPS is pleased to name Rick as our next chair and welcome three new board members who all share in our unwavering commitment to prevent harm," said Nick Lashutka, president of SPS. "Importantly, we would like to thank our past chair, Marcy Doderer, for her leadership and dedication to the board, and Beth, Katy and Madeline for their service and commitment to helping SPS continue to trailblaze in pediatric and patient safety to achieve ZERO."

As president and CEO of Cook Children's Health Care System since 2007, Rick Merrill has led the Fort Worth-based organization during a time of unprecedented growth, including the historic expansion of Cook Children's Medical Center, which nearly tripled the size of its campus in response to the growing need for its services. Under Rick's leadership, Cook Children's began a new era by streamlining its mission and vision into a *Promise* to improve the health of every child in the region through the prevention and treatment of illness, disease and injury. For more than 30 years, Rick has served in leadership roles in large academic/university-based health care systems, including both for-profit and not-for profit health care facilities, and he actively serves on numerous national, state and community advisory boards.



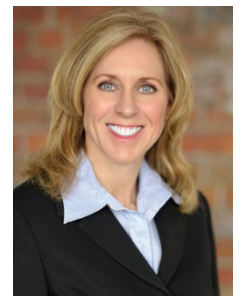
Rick W. Merrill, President & CEO, Cook Children's Healthcare System



Gil Peri, President, Riley Children's Health

Gil Peri has served as president of Riley Children's Health since 2021. Peri is a pediatric healthcare executive with more than 20 years of achieving the best outcomes for patients, families and team members. Previously the president and chief operating officer at Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Peri oversaw health system operations, strategy and innovation. There, he led the hospital's interdisciplinary team and strategically scaled pediatric expertise across a three-state region. A graduate of the University of South Florida, Peri holds master's degrees in business administration and public health and a bachelor's degree in biology.

Carole Hemmelgarn, MS, is the director for the Executive Master's program for Clinical Quality, Safety and Leadership at Georgetown University, and the senior director of Education for the MedStar Institute for Quality & Safety. Carole graduated from Colorado State University with a degree in speech communication. She received a master's degree in patient safety leadership from the University of Illinois Chicago, and a second master's degree in health care ethics from Creighton University. She was an adjunct professor at the University of Illinois Chicago for ten years teaching in their master's program for patient safety. Hemmelgarn is



Carole Hemmelgarn, Senior Director, Executive Master's Program for Clinical Quality, Safety and Leadership at Georgetown University

involved in patient safety work across the country. She sits on the Leapfrog Patient & Family Caregiver Expert Panel, Board of Quality, Safety and Experience at Children's Hospital Colorado, Pediatric Sepsis Outcomes Collaborative at Children's Hospital Colorado, Clinical Excellence Council for the Colorado Hospital Association, and the Board of Directors for the Collaborative for Accountability and Improvement.



Marissa Kiefer, Senior Vice President & CEO of Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital

Marissa Kiefer serves as Senior Vice President and CEO of Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital. In her role, Kiefer leverages her strategic mindset and passion for maternal and pediatric care to enhance operational performance across multiple service lines. In addition, she oversees a multidisciplinary team of health professionals to provide the highest level of care to women and children – including the latest advances in high-risk pregnancy and neonatal critical care – across the region. Kiefer has more than two decades of experience and has held senior leadership positions at nationally recognized health care institutions, including Riley Children's Health in Indianapolis and Children's National Hospital in Washington, D.C. She is Lean Six Sigma Green Belt certified, a Tobias Leadership Fellow and a Carol Emmott Fellow. Kiefer holds a master's degree in health services administration from The George Washington University and a bachelor's degree from Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana.

The Children's Hospitals' Solutions for Patient Safety (SPS) network is an unparalleled, collaborative effort among children's hospitals working to transform pediatric patient and employee/staff safety in pursuit of the vision that no child will ever experience serious harm while in their care. [SPS](#) is a network of more than 145 children's hospitals from the United States and Canada. The SPS network's efforts have spared more than 25,000 children from serious harm and led to an estimated savings of more than \$533 million, with consistent progress toward the goal of eliminating serious harm. The hospitals in the network share information and data regularly to learn best practices that are then spread across the network and shared publicly, along with results, on the network's [website](#).

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