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NEWS RELEASE

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Valley Children's Specialists Monitoring Patients for Inflammatory Syndrome with Possible COVID-19 Link

(Madera, California) – Based on early evidence from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), it appeared that COVID-19 was not affecting children as severely as adults. The vast majority of symptomatic children, from the outset, experienced cold-like symptoms, including fever, runny nose and cough - and this remains the case for many children. Valley Children's Healthcare, our region's only specialized pediatric care network, was prepared for whatever our children might face in dealing with COVID-19.

As with nearly every other aspect of this pandemic, the science, guidelines and medical experiences have changed seemingly every day - including the way that some children experience COVID-19.

This week, the CDC issued a nationwide health advisory advising healthcare teams to look out for pediatric multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) that is potentially associated with COVID-19. This diagnosis mimics symptoms that are associated with Kawasaki disease, an autoimmune response that causes inflammation in arteries, specifically in the heart. The CDC's recent advisory and extensive media coverage of MIS-C is sparking concern among parents and healthcare providers.

"Our experts are prepared to treat these patients," says Dr. David Christensen, senior vice president of medical affairs and chief physician executive. "These symptoms are similar to the classic Kawasaki diagnosis, a disease our specialists at the Willson Heart Center here at Valley Children's have treated for decades. While we are still learning

more about MIS-C and its possible link to COVID-19, our expert physicians and staff treat 50 to 70 cases of Kawasaki disease every year and are fully prepared to care for these children and get them back to being healthy.”

Valley Children’s Hospital has recently treated a patient displaying Kawasaki-like symptoms. While this patient did test positive for COVID-19 antibodies, the link of their Kawasaki-like symptoms to COVID-19 is still under investigation.

“In Kawasaki disease, the body’s immune system goes overboard and starts attacking the body’s own blood vessels after an infection is gone,” explains Dr. Mohammad Nael Mhaissen, medical director of pediatric infectious diseases at Valley Children’s. “Current reports tell us the symptoms of MIS-C are presenting much more severe than a typical Kawasaki case, and in other cases, symptoms are mirroring those of toxic shock syndrome.”

The CDC's recent health alert provides guidance for healthcare providers in the diagnosis of MIS-C. The diagnostic criteria include a fever of at least 100.4 degrees for at least 24 hours, inflammation in the body and hospitalization with problems in organs. Again, these symptoms are similar to those associated with Kawasaki disease.

While this diagnosis is reportedly rare, Valley Children’s encourages parents to be mindful and contact their primary care provider if they see changes in their child’s health.

In order to provide parents and families a platform to ask their questions and get answers from Valley Children’s pediatric specialists on COVID-19 and kids, the healthcare network will launch the “Valley Children’s Virtual Health Series.” This series, hosted through Facebook Live on Valley Children’s main Facebook account, will cover a variety of topics revolving around COVID-19 and children. The first in this virtual series will take place on Monday, May 18 at 2 p.m., Pacific Time.

Valley Children’s will also host online lectures for medical professionals in the coming months.

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About Valley Children’s Healthcare

Valley Children’s Healthcare – one of the largest pediatric healthcare networks in the nation – provides Central California’s only high-quality, comprehensive care exclusively for children, from before birth to young adulthood. Our network offers highly specialized medical and surgical services to care for children with conditions ranging from common to the highly complex at its 330-bed stand-alone children’s hospital or in one of their three neonatal units (28 beds) located across the Valley. In addition, the Valley Children’s Healthcare network includes specialty care centers, pediatric primary care practices, urgent care center and women’s health services.

Our family-centered, pediatric services extend from a leading pediatric cancer and blood diseases center on the West Coast, and a pediatric heart center known for its expertise and pioneering treatments, to a Regional Level IV neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), the highest level referral center between Los Angeles and the Bay Area.

Valley Children’s was the first children’s hospital west of the Rockies to receive Magnet Nursing

designation, the highest nursing benchmark in the world. With more than 640 physicians and 3,500 staff, Valley Children's delivers high-quality, comprehensive care to more than 1.3 million children in its 12-county service area.

For more information, please visit www.valleychildrens.org