

Quick response critical to child's good outcome

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Alton Memorial ER, Transport Team Help Jerseyville Infant Survive

ALTON, IL -- Being first-time parents is stressful enough, but when your child is suddenly faced with a serious illness, it can be unbearable.

Born Sept. 9, 2014, Camden “Cam” Talley was just 1 month old when his parents, Molly Rowling and Chris Talley of Jerseyville, Ill., found themselves in a very scary situation the night of Oct. 9.

Molly and Chris planned to celebrate Cam’s one-month birthday with a photo shoot the next day, but he seemed unusually tired and his crying seemed weaker.

“Being a new mom, I was still a little flustered with the nighttime routine, but I knew something was not right with Cam,” Molly says. “I felt him, and he was a little warm and would not take his feeding at 2 a.m.”

Molly took his temperature, and it was 102 degrees, definitely too high for an infant. She called her mom, Angie Henry, RN, the manager of Surgical Services at Alton Memorial Hospital, and talked to a nurse from the St. Louis Children’s Hospital Answer Line. She was advised by both to take Cam to the hospital right away.

Molly and Chris rushed Cam to Alton Memorial Hospital’s Emergency Department, where his temperature was taken again, and it was even higher than before.

“Dr. (Angela) Holbrook had arrived, and she immediately went into action,” Molly said. “She said she didn’t want to alarm us, but she needed to do a lumbar puncture because she suspected Cam might have meningitis.”

Angela Holbrook, MD, medical director of the Alton Memorial Hospital Emergency Department, says the symptoms that Cam was experiencing were signs of a serious illness.

“I knew meningitis was definitely a possibility when you have an infant in his age group experiencing a high fever, was lethargic and had a change in his mental state,” she says. “We knew we needed to act quickly because he was a very ill infant.”

Molly credits Dr. Holbrook and other Alton Memorial ED staff for their quick thinking, expertise and care when it came time to make the next major decision, which was to transport Cam to St. Louis Children’s Hospital immediately.

Fortunately, Alton Memorial Hospital had become a home base for the St. Louis Children’s Hospital critical care transport team earlier in the year. Ready 24 hours a day, seven days a week, this team consisting of a certified paramedic and two registered

pediatric nurses is on hand to transport critical children and infants by a specially equipped mobile intensive care unit (MICU) or KidsFlight helicopter to specialized care at St. Louis Children's Hospital.

"It is very beneficial to have this rapid access in these situations where you have a very young infant or any pediatric patient who is very ill," Dr. Holbrook says. "Patients like Camden need care at a pediatric hospital, and the transport team, specially trained in pediatrics, is readily available to our emergency department. Having their extra hands on board is a good thing."



Cam was transported by MICU to Children's Hospital with a team consisting of paramedic Justin Chapman and nurses Trisha Taetz, RN, and Justin White, RN.

“I remember Cam because he was quite ill,” says White, who is a resident of Godfrey, Ill., and a parent himself. “The staff at Alton Memorial did a great job expediting his transfer to St. Louis Children’s. Having the critical care transport team so close to home is good for everyone.”

Molly and Chris, who were following the ambulance close behind during the approximate 40-minute ride, learned that Cam had several apneic episodes, where his breathing either slowed or stopped.

“When we got to Children’s, I was very flustered and upset, but the transport team was amazing and they stayed with us to make sure we were all OK,” Molly says. “Once at Children’s, their massive team of knowledge and expertise led to the decision that it was best to sedate Cam and insert a ventilator.”

Cam remained at Children’s for more than a week and spent part of his stay in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit.

“After a few days, they officially diagnosed him with viral meningitis caused by parechovirus,” Molly says. “Within 24 hours, he was taken off the ventilator, weaned off medications and removed from isolation. After eight days at St. Louis Children’s Hospital, we were finally released with a ray of hope that our child would make a full recovery. If it were not for Alton Memorial Hospital and St. Louis Children’s Hospital, I honestly don’t think Cam would have made it.”

Today, Cam is an active, happy little boy. He will continue to see a neurologist at Children’s Hospital until he is 2 years old and takes daily medication due to risk of seizures.

Molly and Chris are both grateful for the support of their families and the caregivers at both hospitals who were there for Cam and their family.

As a nurse herself, Molly’s mom, Angie, was on hand to help her daughter better understand what Cam was going through and to be there for her grandson.

“As a manager at Alton Memorial, I am happy to know that St. Louis Children’s Hospital was here for our family and for all of our pediatric patients who need that resource,” she says. “For it to hit this close to home for me, it was amazing and I am so proud to be a part of this family.”