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PARKRIDGE EAST HOSPITAL OPENS SPECIALLY EQUIPPED EMERGENCY ROOM FOR PATIENTS WITH AUTISM AND SENSORY SENSITIVITY

Chattanooga, TN (April 2, 2019) – Parkridge East Hospital is proud to announce a new initiative to better care for patients with autism or sensory sensitivity. The hospital recently introduced a sensory-friendly emergency room (ER) with special appointments to help ease anxiety and promote a smoother experience for families.

“We treat a high volume of pediatric patients in our ER, and we see many children and adults who have sensory sensitivities,” said Jarrett Millsaps, chief executive officer of Parkridge East. “Our aim is to create a space that makes the ER experience less stressful for patients and their families.”

The sensory-friendly room features adaptable lights, monitor and sound control, soundproof walls and ceiling to minimize ambient ER noise. It also offers specialized toys and a visual story board to help better prepare patients for processes of care. As part of the program’s launch, ER physicians, nurses and ER support staff received special training to help provide for the unique needs of patients with autism and their families.

To ensure the sensory-friendly room meets the needs of patients with autism or sensory sensitivity, hospital leaders partnered with experts from the Chattanooga Autism Center. Their assistance, along with the ER staff’s past experience of caring for patients with sensory sensitivities helped inform the design of the room that reduces anxiety and creates a calming environment.

The sensory-friendly room also takes inspiration from similar rooms at The Children’s Hospital at TriStar Centennial. Parkridge East and TriStar Centennial are part of HCA Healthcare, one of the largest healthcare systems in the world, with 185 hospitals across the United States and the United Kingdom.

Upon arrival to the ER, families who would like to notify ER staff about a sensory disorder may complete a directive that informs providers about a patient’s specific communication abilities and stressors.

For more information, please contact Michael Ferguson, communications specialist at Parkridge Health System, at 423-493-6893 or Michael.Ferguson3@HCAhealthcare.com.

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About Parkridge Health System

Parkridge Health System includes Parkridge Medical Center, Parkridge East Hospital, Parkridge West Hospital, Parkridge Valley Adult & Senior and Parkridge Valley Child & Adolescent campuses. Parkridge Medical Center, in downtown Chattanooga, is an Accredited Chest Pain Center offering comprehensive healthcare services that include a 24-hour emergency department, cardiology, orthopedics, and surgical services in addition to oncology services at Sarah Cannon Cancer Institute. Parkridge East Hospital, also an Accredited Chest Pain Center in East Ridge, provides 24-hour emergency medical services, obstetrical care, a Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, and advanced surgical services in robotics, orthopedics, and gynecology. The four-campus Parkridge Valley offers behavioral health and addictive disorder treatment services for children, adolescents and adults. Parkridge West Hospital, in nearby Jasper, Tenn., provides 24-hour emergency medical services, outpatient laboratory, outpatient imaging, outpatient physical therapy and inpatient behavioral health services at Parkridge Valley West. To learn more, visit www.ParkridgeHealth.com or contact MedLine at (423) 622-6848.