Specialized Care Helps a Young Family on the Go
If the equivalent of frequent flier miles could be accumulated for time spent in the car driving to doctor’s appointments, Laura Andersen and her son, William, would be at Platinum status. Will, 5½ years-old, has Trisomy 21, also known as Down Syndrome, a genetic disorder caused when abnormal cell division results in extra genetic material from chromosome 21.

In his short life, Will has undergone open heart surgery and he has numerous health conditions, which require the care of specialists based in multiple locations across southern Connecticut. He visits a dentist in New Haven; an ophthalmologist in Norwalk; an ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist in Shelton; a cardiologist in Darien; a gastroenterologist (GI) in Greenwich; and his pediatrician is based in multiple locations across southern Connecticut.

In addition, Mrs. Andersen was previously driving Will to a pediatric urologist in Stamford every other day for bladder retention care, occasionally needing to drive to Tarrytown, New York when catheterization was needed. Bowel and bladder dysfunction can affect individuals with Down Syndrome as a result of several factors including decreased muscle tone, hormonal abnormalities, or pelvic floor dysfunction. Not only can it lead to urinary tract or kidney infections, but it can also cause urinary retention that results in extreme discomfort. It was the intervention of Will’s GI provider, Dr. Anthony Porto, that agreed with the recommendation, and surgery was scheduled. In Will’s case, he receives a Botox injection in the urethral sphincter every six months, relaxing the muscle and helping to improve his ability to void.

Will has had great results with the Botox treatments and continues to see Dr. Lambert for continued care. "Driving to Stamford before was not only stressful and inconvenient, but I also never received any answers on Will’s condition," Mrs. Andersen explained. "With Therese and Sarah, they are so helpful and available by cell phone and text, and they are just phenomenal. Our appointments are now just four minutes away and I cannot emphasize enough how much more convenient it is to have such exceptional care close by."

For Dr. Lambert, this scenario was all too familiar. Formerly a pediatric provider in Philadelphia and Manhattan, she met regularly with families who trekked in to the city from its outskirts, seeking the best care large hospitals have to offer. Now, at Greenwich Hospital, Dr. Lambert has made it her mission to get the word out to families across the southern part of Connecticut and into New York that they don’t need to commit to half a day of travel to see a pediatric urology specialist. They can now receive the same level of high-quality urologic care in Greenwich that they would otherwise receive in a large metropolitan area.

MD, Therese Gardere, NP, and Cathy Conway, RN comprise Yale Urology’s Pediatric Urology Clinic at Greenwich Hospital, the result of a recent expansion of Yale New Haven Health into southern Connecticut through a partnership with Greenwich Hospital. Here, families can now benefit from the shared expertise of the Yale Urology pediatric team in coordination with other pediatric specialists at Greenwich Hospital.

Yale’s team works closely with their colleagues at Greenwich Hospital on a case-by-case basis. Dr. Lambert often brings in other providers for combined appointments, inviting GI to consult when managing bowel disorders or gynecology for patients presenting with urogenital issues. Dr. Lambert says this multidisciplinary approach is new to the area and is a huge benefit for families.

For Mrs. Andersen and Will, having access to a specialist so close to their home in Greenwich has been a godsend. While they still need to commute for his some of his other appointments, they now can see Dr. Lambert on the same day and at the same time as Dr. Porto.

And for other families, Dr. Lambert continues to be committed to a grassroots, boots on the ground approach to keeping the community informed. Her team has personally visited more than 60 offices of local pediatric providers letting them know Yale Urology offers multidisciplinary, highly-skilled care and surgery, locally. She’s also active in the community, visiting local schools and other groups.

"While pediatric services are available in this area, our presence now offers families local access to highly-specialized care, including surgery, reducing the need for families to travel," noted Dr. Lambert. "In William’s case, convenience and providing multidisciplinary care has been terrific for the Andersen’s."