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When other treatments failed, Children's had access to a new antibiotic to cure 2-year-old's infection

Olivia Baldwin was 2 years old when she came down with a strange infection and developed a high fever and swelling near one eye. The family pediatrician spent several weeks unable to diagnose what was wrong. In more than 20 years of practice, he had never seen this type of infection.

It was hard for her family to see her sick, and harder still not to know what was wrong or how to care for her. Five years younger than her closest sibling, Olivia is the little sister to three older brothers. Her family loves, dotes-on and treasures her in a very special way.

When the symptoms worsened over a weekend, Olivia was admitted to the emergency room of a North Dallas hospital where she was treated for almost a week. When blood tests and symptomatic diagnoses were inconclusive, doctors cultured the boil on her eye and determined that Olivia had contracted a rare, soil-borne



Olivia Baldwin, 3, an Infectious Diseases patient at Children's, turns the dirt at the Children's Medical Center Legacy groundbreaking.

bacteria called nocardia. The infection usually is caught when people with weak immune systems come in contact with dirt containing the bacteria.

The infection was fairly contained in her head, but doctors told the family that if the bacterial infection was allowed to spread, Olivia would have only a 50-50 chance to live. The odds grew worse when Olivia had an allergic reaction to the antibiotics usually effective against nocardia.

"Our doctor told us that there was nothing more he knew to do and that our only hope was to go to Children's," said Jeff Baldwin, Olivia's dad.

Through a friend who is employed at Children's, the family contacted Dr. Octavio Ramilo, an Infectious Diseases specialist and the medical director for clinical research at Children's.

"Dr. Ramilo heard that our little girl had nocardia and called us back immediately," said Sandy Baldwin, Olivia's mom. "He helped us get into the hospital early the next day and cleared everything from his schedule to see her. He clearly is in this business to help children."

Dr. Ramilo confirmed the nocardia diagnosis and presented the Baldwins with a new option for treatment.

"The Children's medical staff, because of their expertise in treating complex infections, recommended a new drug for nocardia," Baldwin said. "Dr. Ramilo offered us the chance to try it. Lo and behold, it worked. After a few weeks of treatment, Olivia has been free and clear ever since."

Even after contracting the soil-borne nocardia bacteria, Olivia is not scared to play in the dirt. On Oct. 26, she was one of 16 children who helped turn the soil for the groundbreaking of Children's Medical Center Legacy. When it opens in early 2008, the new hospital, located in Plano, will be close to the Baldwins' home.

"As a family with four kids, ages 3 to 13, it is especially comforting to know that the unparalleled care and expertise of Children's will soon be closer to home," Baldwin said. "Children's and Dr. Ramilo came through for our little girl. We are eternally grateful."



Three men who have held the role of president and chief executive officer of Children's stand together, representing a legacy of leadership, compassion and vision that have guided Children's for more than half a century. James Farnsworth, center, 1954-1985; George Farr, left, 1985-2003; and Christopher J. Durovich, 2003-present.