The Special Infant Care Clinic (SICC) clinical services at the NC children’s Hospital use five exam rooms and support areas of the Pediatric Outpatient Clinics in the NC Children’s Hospital. The Pediatric Outpatient Clinics occupies the entire first and ground floors of the facility (more than 20,000 square feet). The Clinic facility has a large central waiting area. There is a separate patient education and financial counseling area with its own small waiting room, consultation area, and administrative offices that occupy the southwest corner; three rooms are designated for patient education. The southeast corner has a suite of administrative offices. The north side of the Clinic area has separate ophthalmologic, ENT, audiology, and orthopedic examination and treatment rooms including a small recovery area for outpatient procedures. The interior of the first floor Pediatric Outpatient Clinics has three functional patient examination units. Each unit has its own area to obtain vital signs and weights, two physician work rooms, private toilet facilities, and access to one of two equipment storage areas. Located centrally in each unit there are a nursing station, a clean utility room, and a dirty utility room. The smallest of these units has eight patient exam rooms with two equipped for plastic surgery consultations and follow-up and one consultant work area. The mid-size unit has eleven examination rooms and one consultant area. The largest unit has 15 separate examination rooms and two consultant work areas. Each general purpose examination room has a built-in sink, charting area, patient examination table, and standard physical examination equipment including diagnostic sets. While each of these units has its own, separate patient entry access, they are contiguous for staff via a set of internal hallways and to the rest of the NC Children’s Hospital floors via service elevators on the north side of the building.

The UNC SICC, under the direction of Dr. Diane Warner, provides developmental evaluation for infants at risk of neuro-developmental delay and identifies and makes referrals to services for infants with special needs. SICC is held 4 Thursdays per month in the Pediatric Specialty Clinic located on the first floor of The North Carolina Children’s Hospital. The clinic is equipped with 1” colored wooden blocks, small bags of fresh “O” shaped cereal, a 3” bright red ball, reflex hammer, floppy disk, bell, Sesame character finger puppets, examining table, stethoscope, otoscope, ophthalmoscope, pulse oximeters, blood pressure sphygmometer, disposable tape measures, scale, and a Bayley III developmental kit.

Infants are scheduled to be seen in the SICC for any of the conditions listed in the table above. Evaluations performed at the SICC involve an evaluation by a pediatric speech pathologist, developmental testing with the Bayley Scales of Infant Development-III, and examination by a neonatologist or developmental pediatrician. Selected cases are examined by a pediatric physical therapist and/or occupational therapist. The highest risk infants are first seen at three months adjusted age or sooner. All other infants are first evaluated at six months adjusted age, and every three to six months thereafter through 24 months adjusted age. Infants enrolled in research studies that require long-term developmental evaluation are seen per individual protocol. Annually the clinic performs over 275-300 evaluations. The rate of compliance for scheduled patients is 93% at six months, 90% at 12 months, and 85% at 18 months. The UNC SICC follows a rigorous process to insure patients get scheduled and patients missing appointments are contacted in multiple ways. Services in the clinic and appointments are coordinated by one of two pediatric nurse practitioners, a neonatal nurse care coordinator and an administrative assistant with the Division of Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine. These individuals are also involved discharge planning in the NCCC and case management during the transition of care for infants with complex needs from the NCCC to local pediatric resources.

A Developmental Pediatrician (Dr. Holly Martin) attends in the SICC at UNC. All pediatric subspecialists listed above, including pediatric neurologists and pediatric surgical subspecialists, are available on a consultative basis. Ophthalmologic examination and treatment and can be scheduled in a separate clinic.

For infants at risk of or with hearing deficits, the SICC utilizes the W. Paul Biggers Carolina Children’s Communicative Disorders Program (CCCDP) which provides communication devices as well as UNC physician, audiological, and speech services for qualifying children with hearing and other communication disorders and is funded through the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, and is based at the Department of Otolaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery at UNC Hospitals. Infants are referred from all counties in North Carolina for testing and, if necessary, fitting of custom-made (by using ear impressions) hearing aids with adjustment to the desired sensation level by modifying the gain and output. Infants and toddlers seen at the SICC frequently have hearing tested in a sound treated audiometry booth via visual reinforcement audiometry or play audiometry. The CCCDP also houses the cochlear implant program.

Infants who have multiple system problems are followed in a multi-disciplinary clinic. For example, children with neural tube defects and children older than two years with cerebral palsy, genetic abnormalities, and other developmental delays are followed by the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Pediatric Rehabilitation Clinic, under the direction of Dr. Josh Alexander, where services include Rehabilitation Medicine, Neurosurgery, Orthopedics, Urology, and Physical Therapy. Infants with cleft lip/palate are followed in the UNC Craniofacial Center, under the direction of Dr. Amelia Drake, where services include General Dentistry, Audiology, Genetics, Neurosurgery, Otolaryngology, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics, Ophthalmology, Pediatrics, Pediatric Dentistry, Plastic Surgery, Prosthodontics, Psychology, Social Work, Speech-Language Pathology, and Speech Pressure-Flow Assessments.

The SICC at The North Carolina Children’s Outpatient Specialty Clinic has an attending neonatologist and attending developmental pediatrician, as well as subspecialty residents (fellows) from Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine and the Center for Development and Learning. Other staff in the SICC include: Developmental Psychologist, Pediatric Physical and Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologist, Pediatric Dietician, Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, and Social Workers.

Each visit to the SICC generates a clinic note that is entered into Epic, the UNC Hospital medical information system. The SICC has an extraordinary record of collecting follow-up information and provides the critical follow-up component to several studies as shown below. Individuals who are involved in research studies are followed up as indicated per protocol.

The SICC is involved in several ongoing NICHD NRN studies with follow-up. The largest of the follow-up studies is the Generic Database Follow-up Study of High Risk infants. Of the 124 infants whose follow-up windows have closed, only 3 have been lost to follow-up, resulting in a follow- up rate of 98%. The NEST study is still ongoing and has a current enrollment of 22 with 100% follow-up rate. The Special Infant Care Clinics integrate their clinic notes into the standard electronic medical record at UNC, which is Epic.

*Updated: 10/5/16*