



CDH Care Center Accreditation CDH Centers of Excellence

www.cdhrefsearch.org



CDH Research International was founded in 1995 as “CHERUBS” and over three decades has grown to become the world’s oldest, largest and leading nonprofit for Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia:

CDH Center of Excellence accreditation signals to patients and families a commitment to exceptional care in the treatment of Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia. It demonstrates to the healthcare community an assurance of high quality standards, specialized equipment, and advanced education of staff members. CDH Centers of Excellence may, in turn, use the accreditation to market themselves as distinguished leaders in CDH care highlighting their commitment to state of the art of healthcare.

To ensure that people with CDH continue to experience gains in quality of treatment and quality of life, CDHRI helps its accredited centers establish a standard of CDH care with specific guidelines that are based on the latest research, medical evidence, and consultation with experts.

Clinical Care Guidelines are identified for the following categories:

1. Diagnosis
2. Surgical Repair
3. Respiratory Management
4. Nutrition and GI Care
5. Multidisciplinary Therapies (Occupational, Feeding, Speech, etc)
6. Long-Term Follow Up and Family Support

Centers must demonstrate a core team (e.g., neonatologist, pediatric surgeon, pulmonologist, cardiologist, geneticist, dietitian, therapists, social worker) and access to specialized resources.

Program Tiers

Tier 1: Participant Center — Commits to following CDH Clinical Care Guidelines; enrolls CDH patients in our Patient Registry; submits basic annual metrics and multidisciplinary team roster. Ideal entry for emerging or resource-limited programs.

Tier 2: Recognized Center — Meets structured standards for staffing, processes, equipment, and pathways; provides evidence via policies, checklists, and a short virtual validation (e.g., video walk-through, screen-share of protocols).

Tier 3: Center of Excellence — Achieves Tier 2 plus demonstrated outcomes benchmarks (e.g., survival to discharge, ventilation days, length of stay), quality improvement initiatives, family experience targets, and peer leadership interview (virtual).

Recognition is valid for 3 years, with light annual updates (attestations + key metrics) and for-cause virtual reviews if needed.

The recognition is evaluated on the following sections:

1. Environmental Focus – the Center provides information about the facility and equipment available for CDH
2. Quality Focus – the Center provides evidence regarding continuous quality improvement activities and adherence to CDHRI Clinical Care Guidelines
3. Patient & Family Focus – the Center has patients complete The Patient and Member Experience Care Survey
4. Enrollment of patients into the CDH Study Group
5. Encourage participation in DHREAMS and the CDH Research Survey.

A multidisciplinary team – such as a surgeon, respiratory therapist, dietitian, feeding therapist, geneticist, genetic counselor, gastroenterologist, speech therapist, developmental pediatrician, pulmonologist/cardiologist, allergist, social worker. Other team members can include a pharmacist, physical therapist, psychologist, chaplain, a patient advocate, etc.

CDH Center of Excellence accreditation recognizes CDH Care Centers’ excellence in the following criteria:

1. Promoting the mission, activities, and vision of CDHRI
2. Patient care by using the highest quality measures, processes, and structures based upon evidence and meeting CDHRI Clinical Care Guidelines
3. Training, education, collaboration, and communication supporting CDHRI guidelines that contributes to a healing environment for families, patients and staff.

The Virtual Recognition Process

Application: Submit form found at <https://cdhi.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/CDH-Research-International-Accreditation-2026-Application.pdf>

Review: Volunteer reviewers (Medical Advisory Board experts) assess documentation; conduct 1–2 hour virtual sessions (Zoom: screen-shares, brief interviews, chart abstractions on 5–10 cases).

Decision: Tier designation awarded; feedback provided. Conditional recognition available where improvements are needed.

Renewal: Annual updates + full virtual review every 3 years.

Fees (to Support Sustainable Operations)

Application/Initial Review: \$2,000 (Tier 2) / \$3,500 (Tier 3); \$1,000 for Tier 1 (covers admin, reviewer time).

Annual Recognition Fee: \$1,500 (Tier 2) / \$2,500 (Tier 3); \$750 for Tier 1.

Add-ons: Re-review (\$750); optional consult call (\$300).

Waivers/discounted rates available for low-resource or international centers in need.

These fees are modest compared to similar programs (e.g., ELSO \$2,000–\$3,500 for 3 years; ACPA ~\$375 initial + annual) and fund volunteer stipends, portal maintenance, and benchmarking tools — with no travel or large overhead.

Anticipated outcomes of CDH Center of Excellence recognition

1. Patients are better informed about comprehensive CDH care
2. Patients have improved access to Centers with expertise in CDH
3. The medical community better informed about standards of CDH care
4. Long term outcomes are improved through Clinical Care Guidelines
5. Increased opportunities for collaboration between Centers and CDH researchers

The benefits of CDH Center of Excellence recognition

1. Accountability – patients, parents and insurance company are ensured that standards are met
2. Ideas for improvement – host centers and site visitors benefit from visits to other CDH Care Centers
3. Securing resources from institution – when a CDH Care Center must meet requirements set forth by the recognition process, this engages the institution to support the CDH Care Center in meeting these requirements for fear that otherwise, the CDH Care Center will no longer be recognized (something that the host institution such as University or hospital would not want to see as the CDH Care Center attracts new patients to its facilities)
4. Public recognition of excellent performers – CDH Care Centers can be the pride and joy for awards at their institutions. They can be a model for all other Centers
5. CDH Care Centers are eligible to apply for research funding through CDH Research International
6. CDH Care Centers are more attractive to research funders such as NIH or private foundations
7. CDH Care Centers are easily identifiable and more attractive to expectant parents researching medical care for unborn patients

For Hospitals Interested We welcome applications from centers treating CDH patients. Download guidelines/application packet or contact us to start: [research@cdhi.org] or via the portal. Pilot cohort launching soon — join early for streamlined review!

For Families Browse our directory of recognized centers for trusted CDH care when it goes live in late 2026. Contribute your experiences via the CDH Patient Registry to help inform standards.

Support the Program Your donation enables virtual reviews, equity outreach, and global benchmarking — raising care standards everywhere.