

# Pediatrician Chris Bassett

opens office at Cowles Clinic



photo by M. Elizabeth Neal

Pediatrician Chris Bassett, M.D. newly arrived at the Cowles Clinic with his wife and office manager Julie, and daughters Olivia 3, and Caleigh, 20 months.



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By M. Elizabeth Neal

f the new pediatrician at the Cowles Clinic never saw an outside patient, he could probably stay busy just looking after his own five youngsters, ages 20 months to nine years, with a set of twins in-between. But, it's his perspective as a parent that drives Chris Bassett as a pediatrician.

"I was a parent before I was a doctor," Bassett confided in a recent interview. "I understand how it is, with a sick child at 1 a.m. in the morning, trying to get a doctor on the line, and talking with someone who lives two hours away and is just handling phone calls, anyway,"

Bassett said. "Literally, I live four minutes from my office, and I love the idea of being the go-to guy, knowing every family in my practice on a first-name basis. It's a dream most pediatricians have, to be honest."

It was a distant dream at his last practice with a large multi-specialty group in Florida, he said. "Dr. #199 was how I was referred to in a lot of communications," he said, laughing ruefully. "After about 18 months of that, I'd had enough, and told my family we were going to look for a hometown place to start my own practice in Georgia or maybe Alabama."

A vacation visit with friends at Lake Oconee led to an introduction to Cowles Clinic founder Robert S. Cowles, M.D., and a meeting of the minds, Bassett said.

His medical specialty is one of the most sought after in the rural counties stretching from Athens to Macon, Conyers to Augusta. Bassett comes to the new job with eyes open, prepared to be busy.

Opening a new practice with a vow to be available to patients 24/7 would be daunting to some. To Bassett, it's a nod to déjà vu, the kind of doctor he had as a youngster, and the kind of doctor he always wanted to be.

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"My commitment to be available to my patients whenever they need me was probably one of the reasons Bob Cowles (founder of the Cowles Clinic) chose me," Bassett said. "He interviewed a lot of pediatricians. But I feel strongly it is the kind of commitment you need to make in a small town."

And small town life is right up Bassett's alley. "We'd hadn't been here a week before I'd met all my neighbors, who kept bringing over all these pies," he said, laughing. "We just love it."

Temporarily ensconced in a large mobile home at the clinic on Linger Longer Road, Bassett eventually will have his own office building within the complex. He didn't want to wait to start his practice here until mortar dried and bricks were laid, however.

Board certified in general pediatrics, Bassett has special interests in newborns, asthma and allergic conditions, dermatology and juvenile diabetes. He encourages prenatal visits from expectant parents.

Cowles' own youngsters were Bassett's first patients in the Lake Oconee area.

"I am proud to say that my two children were the first two patients seen by Dr. Bassett. We are thrilled

that he is here and our community should know that he provides the quality care that I expect for my family as well as for my friends and neighbors," Cowles said in greeting the latest addition to the clinic's fast-growing medical team.

Bassett attended the University of Florida for his undergraduate and doctorate degrees, and graduated from medical school with Honors for Special Achievement in Pediatrics in 1998. He continued his studies with a pediatrics residency at T. C. Thompson Children's Hospital in Chattanooga, Tenn., and became board certified in Pediatrics in October 2001.

For additional information, see the web site at [www.cowlesclinicpediatrics.com](http://www.cowlesclinicpediatrics.com).

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