

Rocky Mountain News

HEALTHY CHANGE FOR CHILDREN'S

Everyone and nearly everything are in place at the hospital's new site, where a nurse says there 'seems to be so much more energy' and the rooms are 'brighter and happier.'

By Joyzelle Davis
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

The gelato bar still needs to be stocked, and there are a few boxes to be unpacked — but otherwise, patients and employees at Children's Hospital settled into their new home Sunday.

"There are a couple of kinks to work out, like figuring out where some of the supplies are," said Kelly Schulte, a registered nurse. "But there seems to be so much more energy here. The rooms are brighter and happier."

After more than six years of planning, the 270-bed, \$560 million hospital in Aurora opened at 7 a.m., Saturday. Throughout the day, the hospital shuttled 111 patients via ambulances some eight miles east, with the last one leaving at 6:43 p.m.

The move adds Children's to the Anschutz Medical Campus, already home to University Hospital, which moved in June, and the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center.

Children's new 1.44 million-square-foot hospital is 73 percent larger than the old facility and includes new family-based amenities, including pull-out sofa beds, private bathrooms, showers and laundry facilities.

"It is so nice to not have wander around the hospital at 2 in the morning looking for a bathroom," said Janay Skinner, whose 10-month-old son, Milo, has lived at Children's for the past six months. Milo was born with a heart defect that caused his trachea to be too narrow.

The new facility also allows Children's to build on its existing research collaboration with University Hospital and CU Medical School, as well as benefit from the nearby bioscience park currently under construction.

The hospitals and school all occupy the 577-acre site of the former Fitzsimons Army Medical Center. Eventually, the area will support 66,000 jobs and \$6.3 billion a year in direct and indirect economic activity.

Children's, which started in 1897 as a tent hospital, had run out of room at its downtown location at Downing Street and East 20th Avenue. The move allows Children's to not only add more much-needed parking and family areas, but also 250,000 square feet dedicated for pediatric subspecialists such as neurosurgeons and physical therapists.

By Sunday morning, banners declaring "We've Moved" ringed the old hospital location, and signs for the emergency department and other facilities were



JUDY DEHAAS/ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

Janay Skinner holds her 10-month-old son, Milo, in his room at the new Children's Hospital on Sunday. Milo has been hospitalized for the past six months because of a disorder that causes his trachea to be too narrow. Milo was among the last five patients to move to the new hospital.

On the move

111 patients transferred to the new Children's Hospital on the Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora.

■ **The first patient** left the old hospital at 7 a.m. Saturday, arriving at the new hospital at 7:45 a.m.

■ **The last patient** left the old hospital at 6:43 p.m., arriving at the new hospital at 7:15 p.m.

■ **The new emergency department** treated 55 patients. The first walk-in emergency patient arrived at 7:15 a.m.; the first ambulance patient arrived at 7:30 a.m.

■ **Hospital furniture** will be auctioned off to staff on Oct. 12 and to the public on Oct. 13.

■ **Medical equipment** will be donated to other hospitals.

taped over.

St. Joseph Hospital is under contract to buy Children's downtown site, where it's studying the possibility of building a new facility.

Children's still retains a foothold downtown. Earlier this month, it opened The Children's Hospital at St. Joseph Hospital, a 16-bed facility. On Saturday, St. Joseph's Children's saw a record 24 patients, said hospital spokeswoman Jessica Ciarvella.

Presbyterian/St. Luke's Medical Center, which is owned by HealthOne, is boosting its pediatric services as well.

The hospital already houses an 84-bed pediatric unit and plans a \$113 million expansion to build a dedicated 100,000-square-foot facility called Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children at PS/L, slated to open in 2010. That facility will have 170 pediatric beds.

As part of the expansion,

HealthOne also plans to expand pediatric services at all its hospitals across the metro area, including Rose Medical Center and Swedish Medical Center.

The plans have been under way for several years, said spokeswoman Angie Anania, and have nothing to do with Children's move to Aurora.

Milo Skinner and his mom woke up on Sunday to sweeping views of the Rocky Mountains, a welcome change from the view of the brick wall they had at the downtown hospital.

"He keeps looking around because there's so much to see in his new room," Janay Skinner said as Milo's eyes wandered from the lime green and lemonade-colored cabinets to the flat-panel TV screen.

Sunday night, he and Janay watched *The Incredibles*, which is part of the hospital's on-de-

mand video selections, but Milo is still too young to enjoy the Xbox gaming consoles that Microsoft donated for each room.

The hospital staff also were busy taking in their new environment, which many of them had seen during test runs in the weeks leading up to the move.

"It's somewhat like starting a new job again," said Natalie Dixon, a registered nurse. "I love that there's lots of light. We can finally tell when it's day or night."

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Moving day
 ■ Rocky photographer Judy DeHaas captured the sights and sounds of the move to the new Children's Hospital in Aurora.