

Rocky Mountain News

New Children's awaits young patients' arrival

Move to new digs in Aurora begins Saturday morning

By Joyzelle Davis
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

Milo Skinner has lived at Children's Hospital's downtown campus for much of his 10-month life, but on Saturday he's getting new digs.

Milo, along with as many as 150 other Children's Hospital patients, is moving eight miles east to Children's new campus in Aurora. There, all of the patients will settle in to bigger, brighter and quieter rooms equipped with the latest technology.

"I think he'll do great during the move. He loves to get out," said his mom, Janay Skinner.

After six years of planning, the 270-bed, \$560 million hospital is scheduled to open at 7 a.m. on Saturday. Children's will become part of the Anschutz Medical Campus, already home to the University of Colorado Hospital, which moved in June, and the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center.

The emergency room at the downtown location will shut down at 7 a.m. Saturday as well.

Children's, which started in 1897 as a tent hospital, had run out of room to expand at its downtown location.

In the mid-1990s, the 577-acre site of the former Fitzsimons Army Medical Center in Aurora became available, allowing Children's, University Hospital and the CU Medical School to combine their resources on the same campus.

Unlike the University Hospital move, which was conducted over several weeks this spring, all of

Children's patients likely will transfer to their new homes in a single day. The first patient transfers will begin at 7 a.m., continuing throughout the day via ambulance, helicopter and — for patients who are healthy enough — their parents' cars.

An estimated 130 to 150 patients will be shuttled to the new hospital, depending on the flow of patient admissions and discharges in the next 24 hours. If the number stays around 130, the move should be wrapped up by Saturday night, said hospital spokeswoman Melissa Vizcarra.

The new hospital rooms feature posh accommodations for patients and visiting families alike, including flat-screen TVs, individual bathrooms with showers, expanded sibling child care and lower countertops for kids at reception areas.

For Milo, it's the latest move in an already eventful life. The bubbly, brown-eyed boy was born in Colorado Springs last November with a heart defect that resulted in the narrowing of his trachea, which transports air from the throat to the lungs.

Within hours, he was on a Flight for Life helicopter on his way to Children's, where he underwent six hours of surgery. After recuperating at Children's Colorado Springs annex, he was readmitted to Children's downtown location because his trachea was flopping shut between breaths.

Fortunately for Milo, the prognosis is good. While he currently has a tracheostomy and is hooked to a ventilator that holds his airway open, as he grows older his trachea should grow strong enough to support itself, his mom said.

"The colors at the new hospital are great, and everything is so clean and bright," Janay Skinner said, beaming at her son. "There are going to be lots of new things to look at."



PHOTOS BY JAVIER MANZANO/ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

▲ **Born with a heart defect**, Milo Skinner has spent most of his 10 months at Children's Hospital in Denver. He is among the 130 to 150 patients who will move to the hospital's new Aurora location Saturday. Milo's mom, Janay Skinner, is excited about the move. "There are going to be lots of new things (for Milo) to look at."

◀ **Ronnie Duran**, an employee of Duffy Crane and Hauling Co., guides a load of MRI supplies suspended from a crane. Children's MRI machine must make the move, too.

The move

Children's Hospital will shutter its downtown location, including the emergency room, at 7 a.m. Saturday. When the lights go out at the old building, the doors will open at the Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora. From 130 to 150 patients will be transferred to the new location throughout the day.

■ **New hospital address:** 13123 E. 16th Ave., Aurora

