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Moving day for Children's

On Saturday, scores of young patients at Children's Hospital in Denver, including Carter Harris, above, headed to the hospital's new digs in Aurora. The 2-year-old held mom Danette Tafoia's hand as he received a round of chemo Friday before being moved.

DENVER & THE WEST » 1C

SMOOTH MOVE FOR CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL



Cancer patient Carter Harris, 2, plays with a broom in the hall of the old hospital Saturday before being moved. Photos by RJ Sangosti, *The Denver Post*

Patients all tucked in at new site

By Katy Human *The Denver Post*



Dr. Kerry Moss gives Carter a kiss Saturday. As the hospital's move to Aurora proceeded slowly, Carter had time to soak up extra affection from the staff.

Carter Harris, a 2-year-old cancer patient at Children's Hospital, was still toddling down hallways in the hospital's old Denver building at 9 a.m. Saturday — two hours after staff expected him to catch an ambulance ride to the new hospital in Aurora.

"It's going slower than we thought," said Carla Woolley, an oncology staff assistant, gesturing to plastic-wrapped equipment still lining the hallways.

But for Carter, who will turn 3 on Halloween, the delay just meant more time to play and a shower of extra attention. Nurse Carol Van Daam pulled him through the hall in a red wagon, the boy grinning at anyone who would look.

Children's Hospital moved from Denver to Aurora on Saturday, closing the old emergency room at 7 a.m., and opening for business at the

same time in a new, \$567 million building in Aurora, near the University of Colorado Hospital.

Through Saturday evening, the move was proceeding smoothly — mostly. Some supplies were needed in the new location, and the elevators quit in the old hospital for a time, but the patients were fine.

At 6:43 p.m., the last patient left the old hospital, said spokeswoman Ramonna Tooley. Ambulances and vans transported 111 patients in 12 hours — 12 kids were discharged earlier

HOSPITAL » 7C



Danette Tafoia and Carter take in the view from Carter's room at the new Children's Hospital in Aurora. Photos by RJ Sangosti, *The Denver Post*

HOSPITAL: Staff ironing out the wrinkles

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in the day.

In oncology, three of 14 patients were well enough to be discharged before 8 a.m. Saturday.

"Yahoo!" Van Daam yelled after taking the call. "We have three kids going home we don't have to move."

Vulnerable to infection

Carter has acute myelogenous leukemia, a cancer of the blood and bone marrow, said his mother, Danette Tafoia.

The child, who also has Down syndrome, went through one bout of chemotherapy last September, Tafoia said, and seemed cancer-free for five months.

He relapsed in August.

Tafoia brought him back to Children's on Monday, for a round of more intense chemotherapy.

His hair fell out Tuesday, Tafoia said.

"He didn't lose it last time," she said, stroking Carter's bald head.

A nurse came in to give the boy two medicines by mouth — one to prevent pneumonia, the other to prevent fungal disease. Because of his leukemia and the intense chemotherapy drugs he's on, Carter is extremely vulnerable to infection.

He was scheduled for an early departure for that reason, Van Daam said.

"We want him in a clean ambulance," she said.

Down the hall, Trish Montano, clinical coordinator and self-described "air-traffic controller" for the oncology department, answered a call from the new hospital.

"They want everyone to know the patients are coming over without hats and urinals," she called out. "They need us to bring them. They don't have any over there."

Urinals and "hats," named for their shape, are urine-collection devices, used when staff must weigh patient input and output, test it, or dispose of it properly.

Some chemotherapy drugs can be dangerous, even after they pass through the body, Montano explained.

View of the mountains

Carter's transport team finally picked him up at 9:30 a.m., strapping him — crying — onto a gurney. He slept most of the 20 minutes it took to drive across town, his mother said, but was wide-eyed as he entered the new building.

So was Tafoia. "It's big," she said. "I'm going to get lost in here."

About 10:15 a.m., the two walked



Staff members at Children's Hospital in Denver strap in Carter so he can be moved to the new Children's Hospital in Aurora on Saturday. Ambulances and vans transported 111 patients in 12 hours.

into Carter's new room on the seventh floor, with a view of the balloon-lined entrance to the new building — and the mountains beyond.

"I'm afraid to touch anything, it's all so nice," Tafoia said. "It's like a hotel."

Carter stood on the sofa, licked the window and grinned.

Back at the old hospital, several elevators stopped working mid-day Saturday.

In a service elevator, carrying stacks of empty boxes, Woolley

rolled her eyes.

"I don't like this very much," she said, "but at the new hospital the other day, they didn't work either. It'll take awhile before all the glitches are worked out, I'm sure."

Five transport teams scrubbed down gurneys in the dark lobby of the old hospital.

Private shower in room

At midafternoon Saturday, Tafoia took a shower in her private bath, steps away from Carter's crib.

It took awhile to figure out the wa-

ter controls, she laughed, but no complaints: At the old hospital, she could shower in a shared facility only between 6 and 10 a.m., or 7 and 10 p.m.

Later, holding Carter, Tafoia watched "The Little Mermaid" on-demand on her room television, ignoring the X-box 360 that also was available.

There are new X-boxes in every room in the new hospital, Montano said. "The boys love 'em. They're not going to want to go home."

About 4 p.m., clinical assistant Carissa Kullman walked into Carter and Tafoia's new room with a blood-pressure cart. She couldn't coax the machine to get a reading from the boy's leg.

"I'll come back," Kullman said. "This is our only machine. Hopefully, they're bringing more."

Tafoia said she hoped to be home in Pueblo by Halloween for Carter's birthday.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation is going to redecorate his room, Tafoia said, with a Peter Pan theme.

"He'll have new pictures, furniture, figurines, TV, DVD player," Tafoia said.

"A lot of families take trips, but Carter, he gets scared at places like amusement parks, and I'm afraid of infection" she said.

"And Peter Pan is magical."

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Carter dances to music on the radio Saturday morning at Children's Denver campus.