St. Elizabeth Hospital Opens Full-Service, Inpatient Pediatric Unit

The continuum of family-centered health care is further enhanced for our young patients this year when St. Elizabeth Hospital opens an inpatient Pediatric Unit.

Plans to open an inpatient, six-bed, pediatric unit were recently approved in a Certificate of Need. Bed size for the unit was determined based on trends in bed utilization and length of stay for pediatric patients in the hospital’s demographic area.

Planned for location on the seventh floor of the North Wing, the unit will have secure doors where visitors to the unit are buzzed onto the floor. The pediatric unit is being designed for a child’s point-of-view with a low-walled play area located in full observation from the nurses’ station. The low walls, designed so that little ones can easily see into an area, are repeated around the nurse’s station. The corridors and rooms will be furnished in light-colored woods and brightly decorated in themes pleasing to children. Room furniture will include cribs and youth beds.

Staffed with nurses trained in pediatric care, the unit will be equipped with a treatment room where any type of invasive exam or procedure will be done, even the simple starting of an intravenous medication.

This is so that the child does not associate his/her room with unpleasantness or pain.

In order to lessen the child’s anxiety of separation, parents will be allowed 24 hour access to the pediatric unit and will be encouraged to “sleep-over” if they, or the child, so desire.

Also, when the new Pediatric Unit opens, pediatric surgical services will expand to include general and orthopedic surgery that requires a stay of overnight or more. Currently, only same-day surgery is available for pediatric patients.

The pediatric unit was planned in response to the community’s needs and in response to the current trends in hospital insurance plans. Current managed care plans look more favorably at hospitals where clients can receive full health care services for all family members. Also, based on the utilization of the Hospital’s Pediatric Health Center, more and more community members are looking toward St. Elizabeth Hospital for their family's health care needs.

The Pediatric Health Center is one of three services at St. Elizabeth Hospital’s Health Centers where medical care is offered in family practice, women’s health and pediatric health.

Pediatric Care at St. Elizabeth Hospital Rooted in a Rich History

As pictured left, in the early 1900’s when St. Elizabeth Hospital’s facilities were comprised of a brownstone on South Broad Street with a Rear Wing , pediatric patients were cared for in a ward; an Open Air Pavilion housed a ward for children with chronic medical problems.

Right, a Sister of Charity attends a child in 1954 when the Hospital treated 874 pediatric patients in a “modern” facility in the “new” red brick building whose front entrance was on South Broad Street.

Even though the former pediatric unit closed in 1971, St. Elizabeth Hospital continued to provide tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy surgical procedures. Pictured above, Edith Gribbons, a former head nurse, comforts one of these surgery patients during Christmas of 1975.

Above, in 1965, Sister Claire Maureen, a former radiology technician prepares a pediatric patient for an x-ray.

Above, St. Michael’s Girl Scout Troop visited St. Elizabeth’s pediatric patients on April 1, 1958 and distributed hand-made stuffed animals.