Your Guide to the Benjamin Russell Hospital for Children

Rooms
- All rooms are of the same size and configuration
- All private rooms (including PICU, Special Care, CICU and NICU)
- All have patient zone, family zone and staff zone
- Family zone features a sleeper sofa, large wardrobe and small safe for valuables
- Patient education/entertainment system
- Acute care and critical care rooms – spacious room with bathroom
- NICU – spacious room with shower facilities on floor
- Rooming-in accommodations give parents of newborns the opportunity to practice at-home care routines
- GetWell Network, a state-of-the-art, integrated patient education delivery system

The 12-story building exceeds 750,000 square feet, making it the largest single medical facility expansion project in the history of Alabama.

Bed licensing increased from 275 to 332, plus 48 NICU bassinets (six additional bassinets).

The new building, equipment and furnishings cost approximately $400 million. The building fund was financed through tax-exempt bonds ($235 million) and philanthropy ($110 million), with the remainder from cash out of hospital operations.

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Benjamin Russell Hospital for Children

The Benjamin Russell Hospital for Children was named to honor legendary entrepreneur Benjamin Russell (1876-1941) and to recognize the $25 million gift made by his grandson Ben and Ben’s wife, Luanne, both longtime supporters of the hospital.

The Benjamin Russell Hospital for Children is the third largest pediatric hospital in the United States, behind Cincinnati Children’s and Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

For the first time, we have shell space for future use (located on the 11th and 12th floors). We also have space allotted for four more rooms in the Emergency Department, four additional general surgery rooms and one more cardiovascular surgery room.

The new helipad is large enough for “Black Hawk” helicopters – the kind used by the National Guard during disasters. Some hospitals were unable to accommodate the Black Hawk during Hurricane Katrina rescue efforts.

The operating budget for the new facility is approximately $2 million a day. The operating budget prior to the expansion was $1.3 million a day.

The next big project for Children’s after the Benjamin Russell Hospital for Children is the “adaptive re-use” of the existing facility.

We now have 17 state-of-the-art operating rooms – five more than before the expansion. We also have two cardiovascular surgery rooms – the first in Children’s 100+ year history.

About the Art

Approximately 120 works by Alabama artists are featured throughout the new facility. “Resilience,” a stained glass work by Children’s of Alabama employee Mary Allain, is located on Main Street in the Meditation Room.

Mary’s inspiration for the piece comes from the “river” that is used to assist with wayfinding in the hospital’s public passageways. In her work, Mary incorporates the Cahaba River and the Cahaba Lily.

“The Cahaba River flows through Birmingham, providing a nurturing environment to a wide variety of unique plants and wildlife – similar to our diverse and multi-cultural blend of patients and families,” Mary says. “And, also like our patients, the Cahaba Lily requires a very specialized habitat. These beautiful flowers start their lifecycle in a rocky riverbed. In spite of this difficult beginning, they push through the rocky areas and bloom into fantastic, perfect flowers.”

Technology unsurpassed in the nation

The Benjamin Russell Hospital for Children enables Children’s of Alabama to deliver new and enhanced services to very ill children and their families.

Among the most exciting features of the new facility are its 16 state-of-the-art operating suites equipped with cutting-edge technology – including a “hybrid” operating room (OR) that is a cross between an OR and a cardiac catheterization lab (used for diagnosis and treatment of heart problems). The Hybrid OR is one of the most technologically-advanced rooms in the hospital.

The Colonol Harland Sanders neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), located on the new facility’s sixth floor, is comprised of 48 neonatal bassinets. Previously, Children’s NICU was arranged in a ward-type design with limited privacy and visiting hours. Now, each bassinet is in a private room with enough space for both parents to comfortably remain with their baby around-the-clock.

Services include neonatal surgery and extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO).

When the Children’s of Alabama Pediatric Transplant Program becomes fully operational, children who need heart transplant surgery or a new kidney or liver will be able to receive high-tech, sophisticated pre-op, surgery, post-op and rehabilitative care all on one campus.

The expansion makes us the third largest pediatric hospital in the United States, behind Cincinnati Children’s and Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh.

The new facility includes the first in Children’s 100+ year history.

The US Green Building Council administers LEED certification and evaluates projects according to established and nationally accepted criteria for building performance in five key areas: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

The Children’s of Alabama expansion is expected to become Alabama’s first LEED-certified hospital building under LEED version 2.2 for New Construction and the largest LEED-certified project in the state to date, largely underwritten by a portion of the McWane, Inc. and the McWane Foundation capital campaign gift.

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The main corridor of the expanded hospital is the second floor, called “Main Street.” From that floor patients and visitors can reach the existing hospital building, which houses patient rooms and offices. A wavy blue “river” runs through the public areas of the new facility to assist with wayfinding. The river sparkles thanks to the use of recycled mirrors and seashells.

The babies who come to Children’s with life-threatening illnesses or congenital abnormalities are transported from their birthing hospitals to be treated by a multidisciplinary team of doctors who specialize in advanced, life-saving neonatal care. We now have 48 NICU bassinets — six more than pre-expansion.

Our new Emergency Department is larger and more operationally efficient. We have 48 exam rooms (up from 35), four trauma bays (previously we had two) and one minor procedure room. As for efficiency: The ambulance entrance, CT Scan area, elevators from helipad and trauma rooms are very close to each other — and this can make all the difference in a trauma situation where every second counts.

The large red ball in the terrazzo flooring is used throughout the facility to indicate locations where patients and families can obtain information — at information desks and nursing stations, for example. The circle mimics the Children’s of Alabama red ball logo.