

SRMC to open dedicated pediatric unit

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By Mike Towle



In a move aimed at enhancing Sumner Regional Medical Center's level of pediatric care, CEO Mary Jo Lewis announced Monday that the Gallatin-based hospital will soon open a 10-bed dedicated pediatric care unit for infants and children up to age 18.

The new unit, which is expected to be open by the end of December, will essentially involve renovating what had been an empty third-floor wing of the hospital and turning it into a facility focused on specialized pediatric care. The hospital has planned a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house event for 1 p.m. on Sunday, December 18.

"We want to emphasize our strongest service lines, and pediatric care is one of them," Lewis said. "This was something our physicians wanted – it was their idea. You could say that this gives us a piece of Vanderbilt care right here in Gallatin.

"The unit will be staffed by the Vanderbilt Integrated Provider pediatricians on SRMC's medical staff, a certified pediatric nurse and a pediatric nursing team who have received extensive training in pediatric care."

The staffing and opening of the SRMC Pediatric Care Unit is touted by hospitals officials as strengthening its partnership with Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt. The Gallatin Children's Clinic's eight pediatricians, part of the Vanderbilt Integrated Providers MidSouth network of physician clinics, will treat patients admitted to the unit. Additionally, SRMC's pediatric nursing team has already been receiving specialized on-site training at Vanderbilt.

"These nurses will now be exclusively pediatric. There will be no more going back and forth between adult patients and child patients," SRMC spokesperson Rachel Lassiter said. "It's a big deal for a community hospital to be making this kind of commitment to the citizens it serves."

Once child patients start getting admitted to the new Pediatric Care Unit, they will be treated to high-end amenities to go with the specialized pediatric care.

"The unit features child-inspired décor, brightly colored private patient rooms with large, flat screen televisions and PlayStation® video gaming units, and a newly designed activity room filled with toys and other activities to take a child's mind off being ill," said Jan Moser, R.N., Director of Pediatrics at SRMC.

SRMC's pediatricians played an integral role in the development of the dedicated Pediatric Care Unit.

"This gives Gallatin, Sumner, and the surrounding counties local access to a new level of care," said pediatrician Ron Miller, M.D., who is also chief of the SRMC medical staff.

Dr. Norman Spencer added, "Our association with Vanderbilt allows us to quickly access specialty care and intensive care facilities if the child's course or illness warrants it."